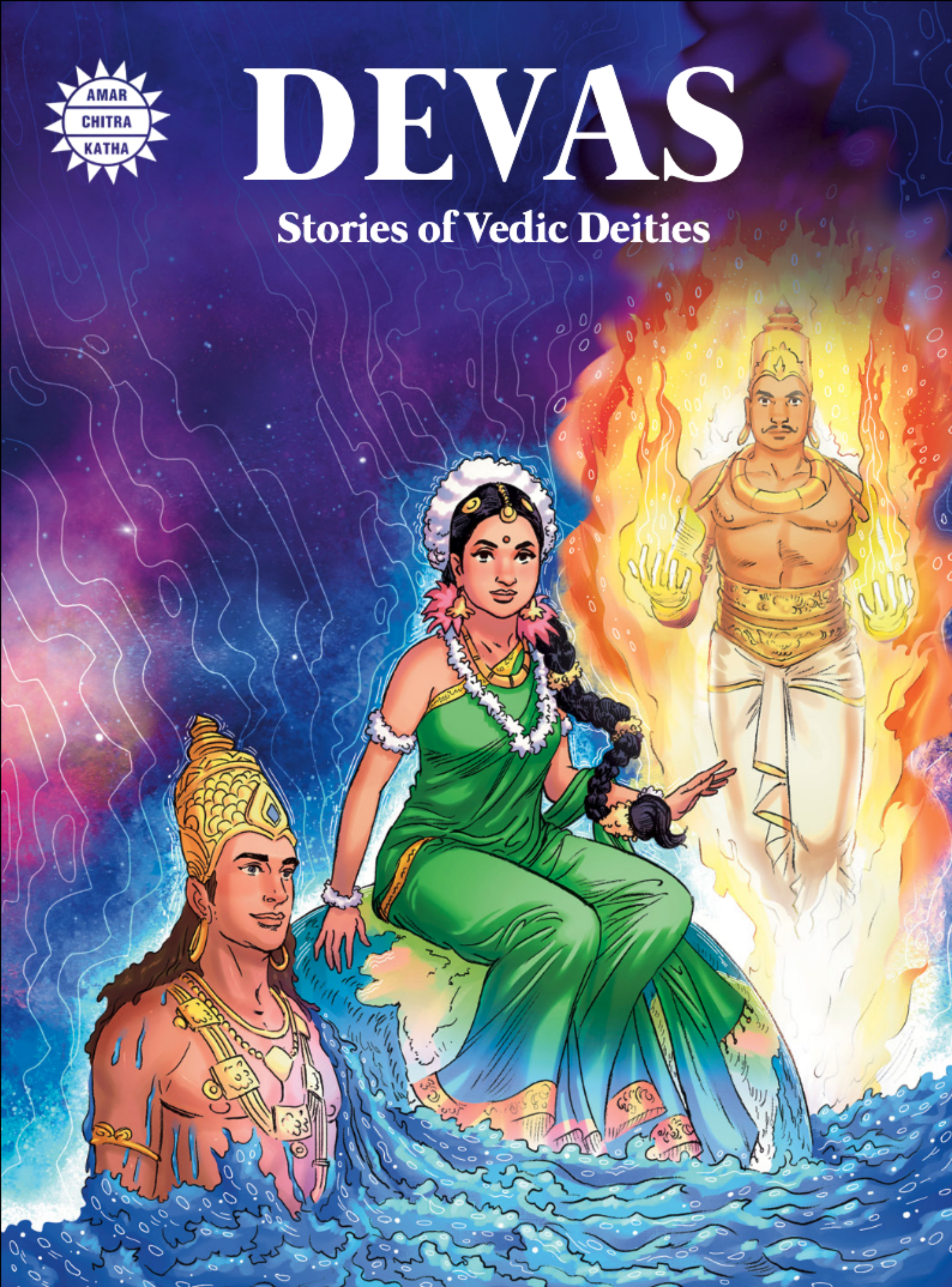




DEVAS

Stories of Vedic Deities





DEVAS

STORIES OF VEDIC DEITIES

Executive Editor
Reena Ittyerah Puri

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Edition I

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DEVAS

Stories of Vedic Deities





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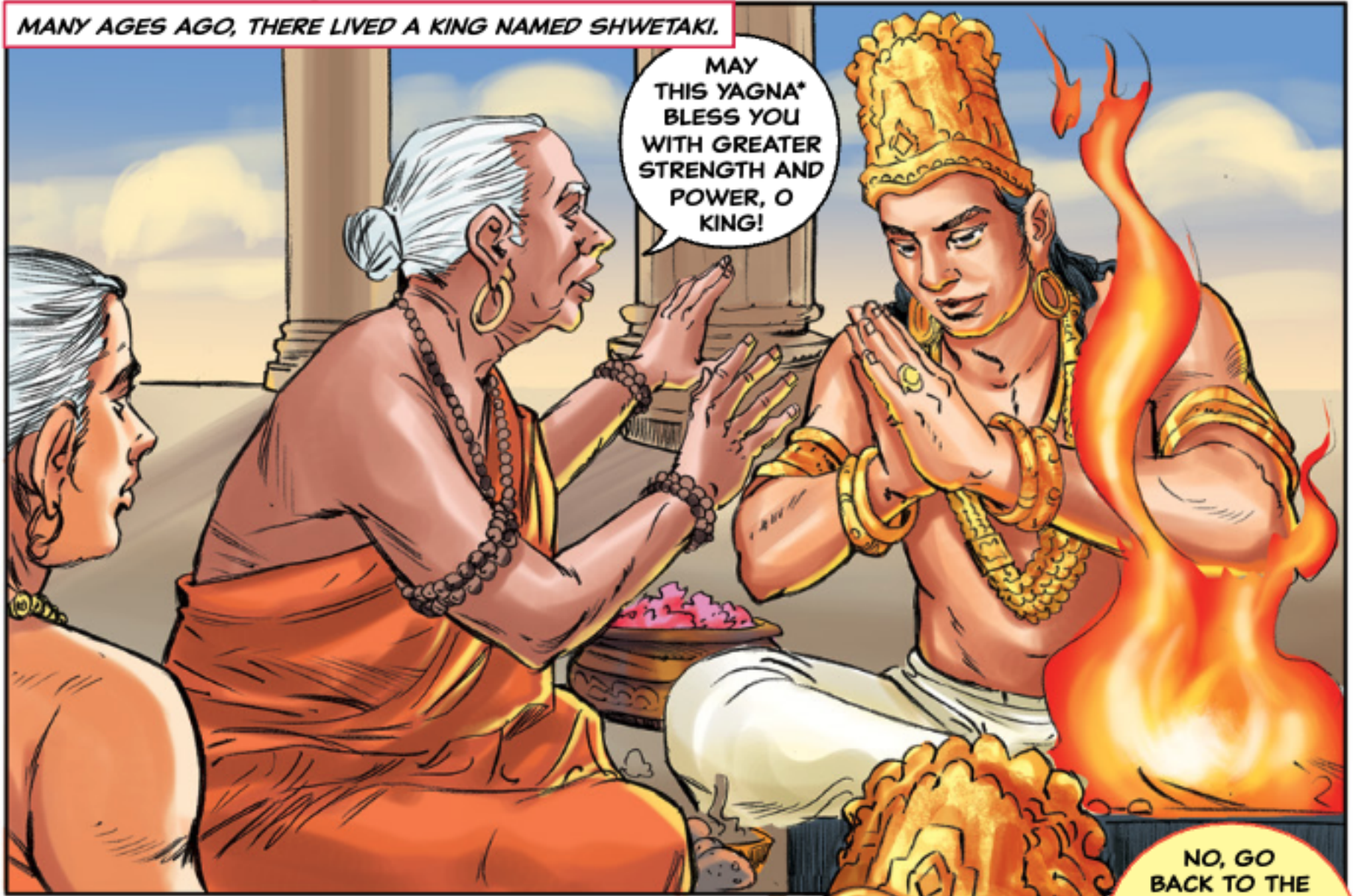
AGNI

AGNI, THE GOD OF FIRE, RULES OVER THE SOUTH-WEST DIRECTION. HIS CAPITAL CITY IS TEJOVATHI.

HE HAS BEEN WORSHIPPED AS THE MESSENGER OF THE GODS SINCE VEDIC TIMES. HE CONSUMES THE OFFERINGS MADE TO HIM AND CARRIES THE WISHES OF PEOPLE TO THE GODS.



MANY AGES AGO, THERE LIVED A KING NAMED SHWETAKI.



DETERMINED TO GET MORE POWERFUL, SHWETAKI BEGAN TO CONDUCT MORE YAGNAS.

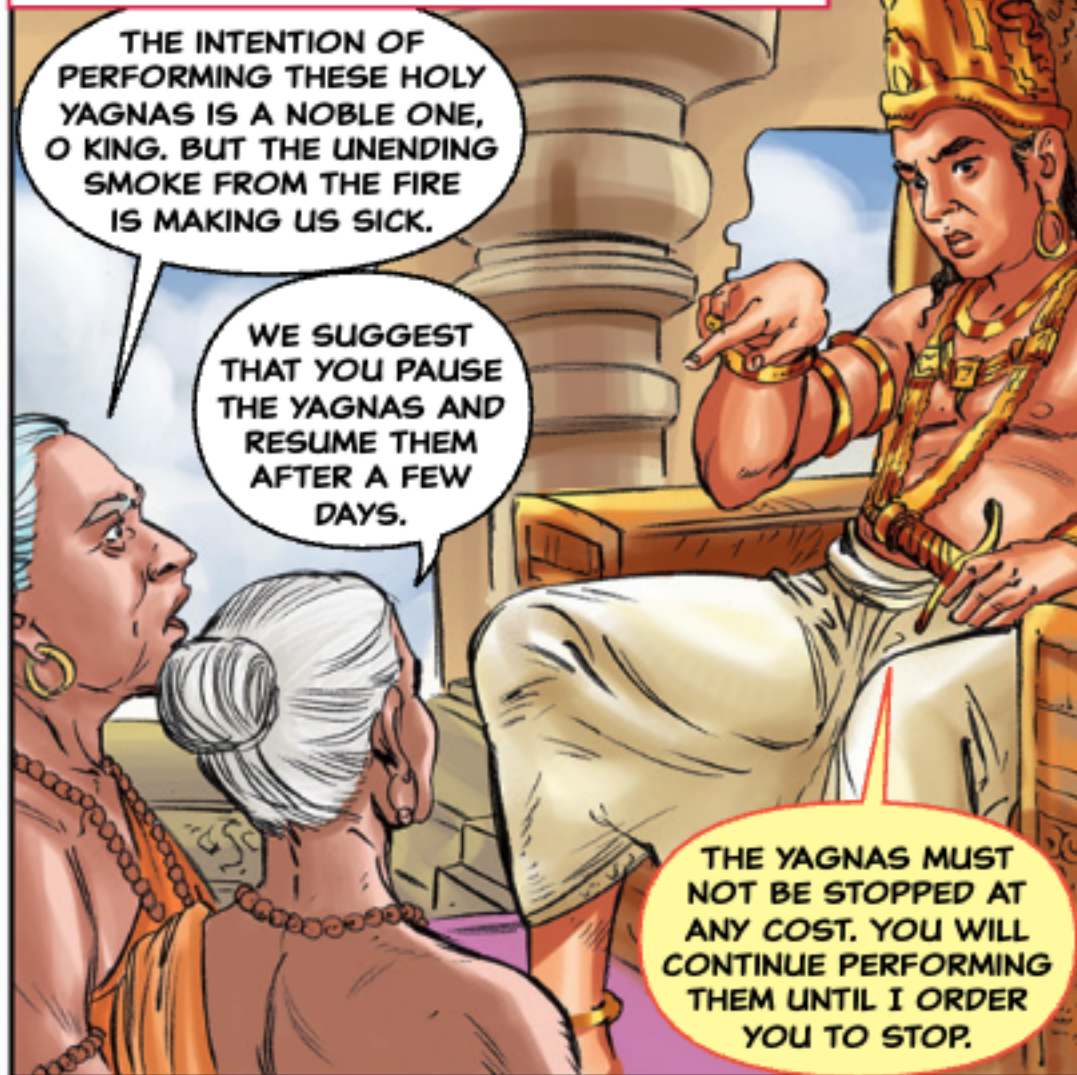


BUT —

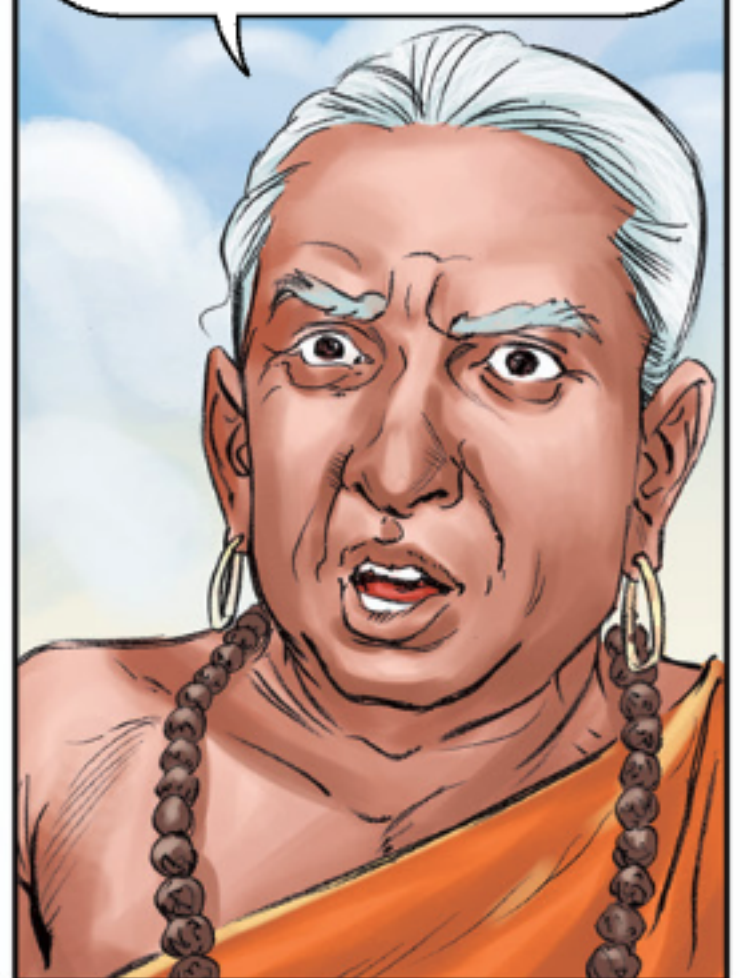


*FIRE SACRIFICE

THE PRIESTS DECIDED TO APPROACH THE KING.



HOW DARE YOU SPEAK TO US IN THIS WAY! AS PUNISHMENT, NO PRIEST FROM THIS KINGDOM WILL PERFORM YOUR YAGNAS.

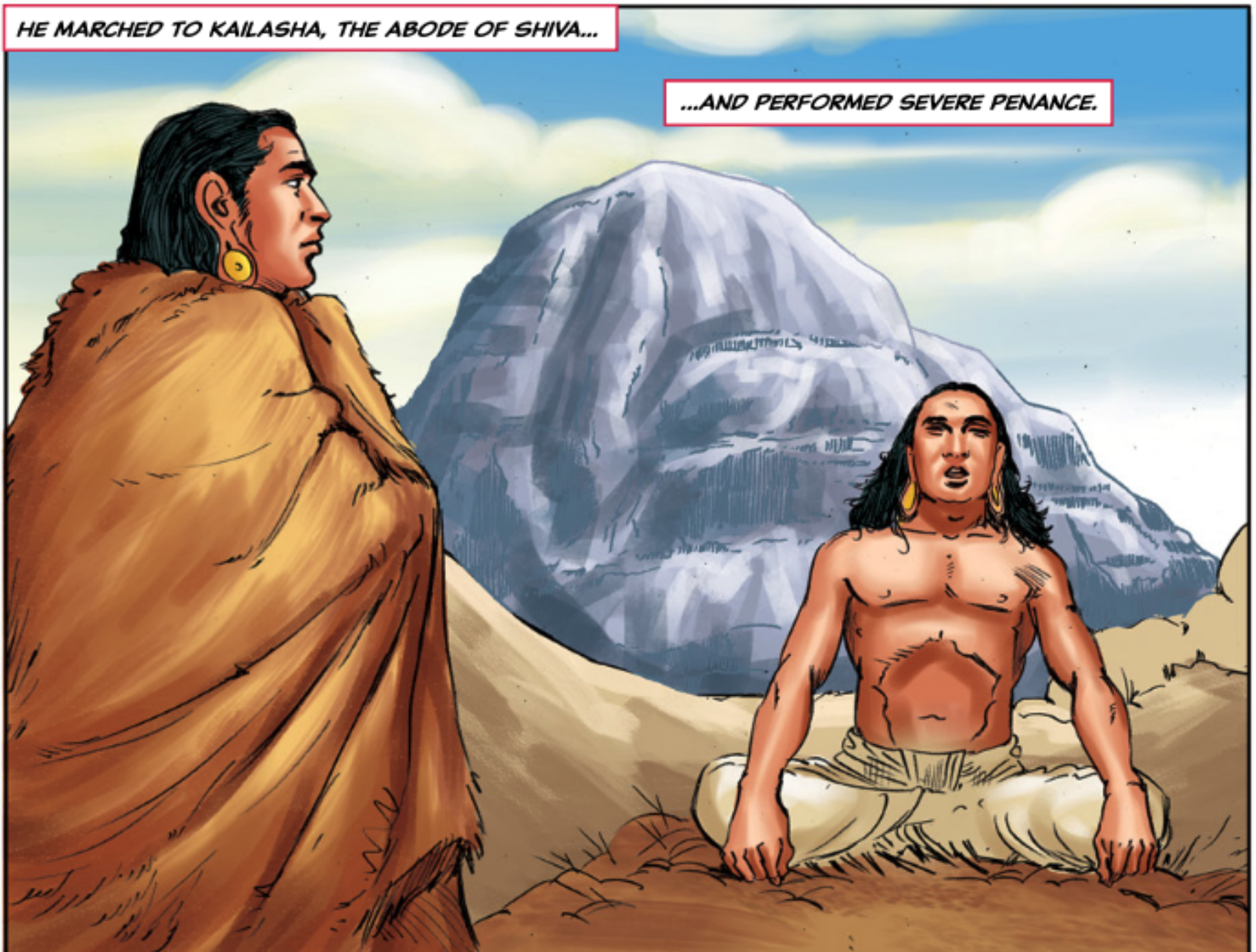


BUT IN HIS THIRST FOR POWER –



THE PRIESTS FROM THE NEIGHBOURING KINGDOMS ARRIVED AND BEGAN TO PERFORM THE YAGNAS.





WHEN SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE HIM —

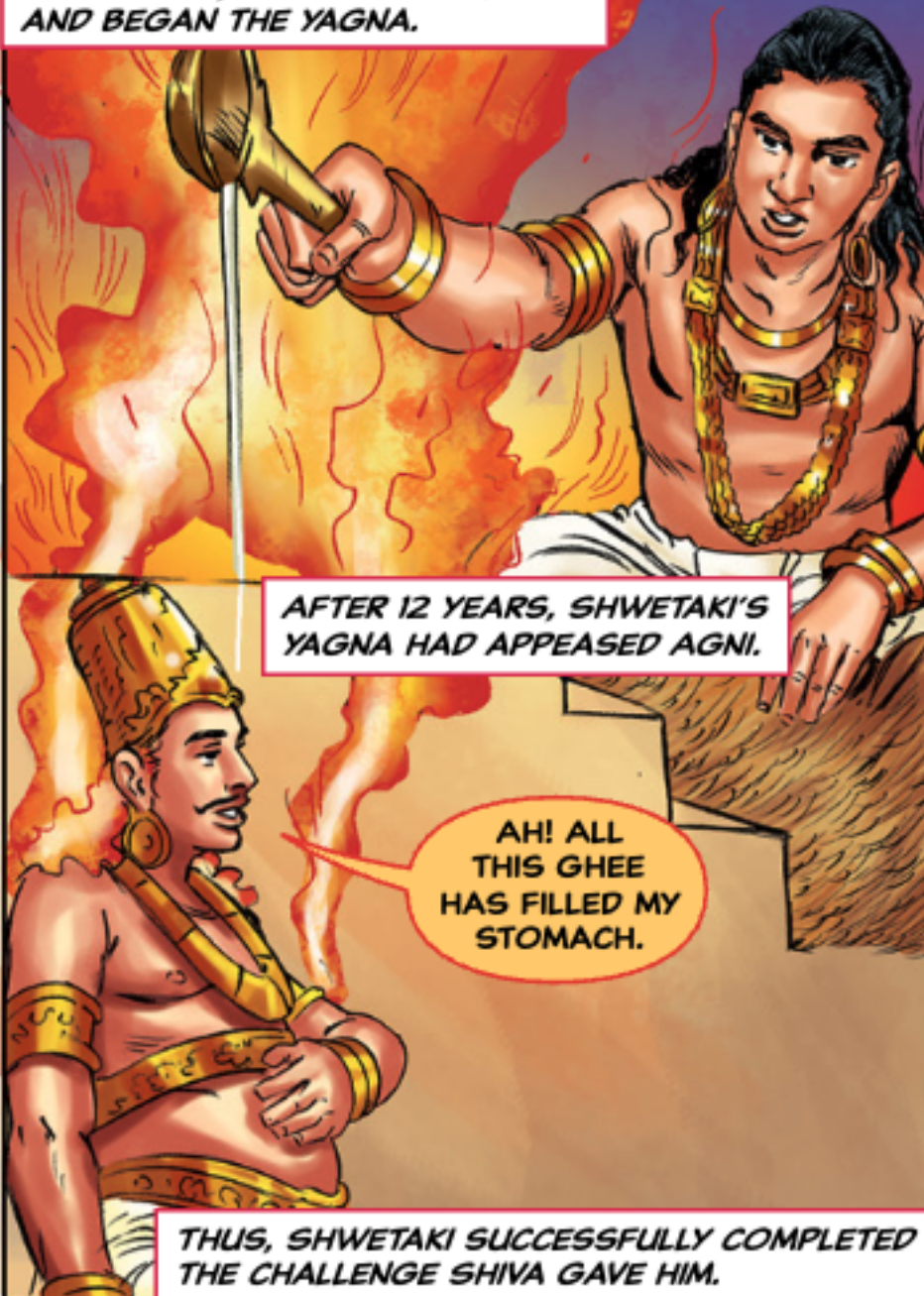
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME, SHWETAKI?

I NEED A PRIEST TO PERFORM MY YAGNAS. FIND ME A SUITABLE ONE, LORD!

FIRST, YOU MUST PERFORM A YAGNA AND POUR GHEE AS AN OFFERING FOR 12 YEARS. THEN I WILL FIND YOU SOMEONE.



DETERMINED, SHWETAKI RETURNED AND BEGAN THE YAGNA.

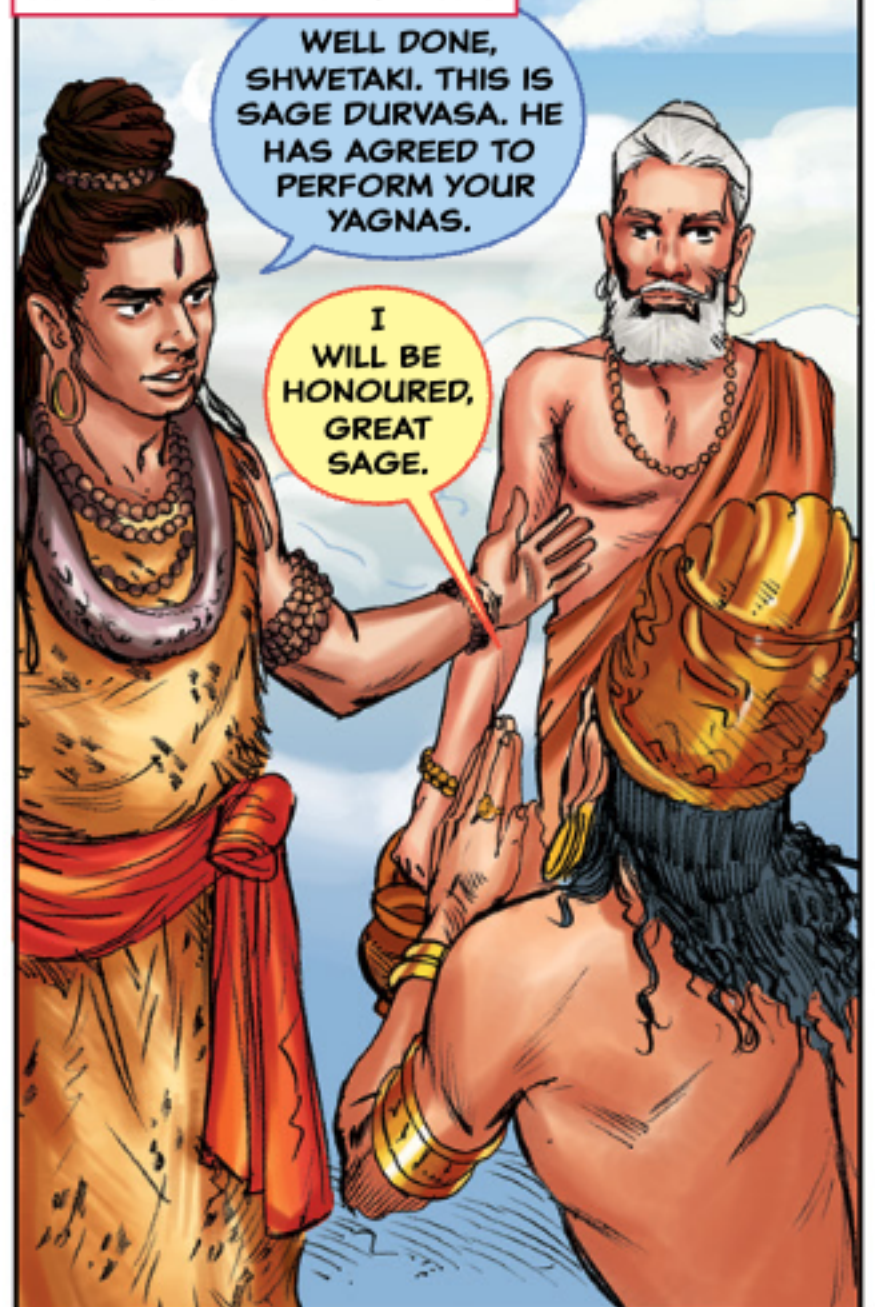


AFTER 12 YEARS, SHWETAKI'S YAGNA HAD APPEASED AGNI.

AH! ALL THIS GHEE HAS FILLED MY STOMACH.

THUS, SHWETAKI SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE CHALLENGE SHIVA GAVE HIM.

HE RETURNED TO KAILASHA.



WELL DONE, SHWETAKI. THIS IS SAGE DURVASA. HE HAS AGREED TO PERFORM YOUR YAGNAS.

I WILL BE HONOURED, GREAT SAGE.

*CLARIFIED BUTTER

BACK AT THE PALACE —



THE SAGE SHOWED NO SIGNS OF FATIGUE. THE YAGNAS CONTINUED FOR MANY YEARS.



UNABLE TO TAKE IN ANYMORE OFFERINGS, AGNI RUSHED TO BRAHMA.



THERE IS ONLY ONE SOLUTION TO THIS, AGNI. BURN THROUGH THE KHANDAVA FOREST WHERE THE ASURAS AND RAKSHASAS LIVE. YOU WILL BE CURED.



*GODDESS OF SACRIFICES AND WIFE OF AGNI; HER NAME IS UTTERED WITH EVERY OFFERING MADE TO THE FIRE

FOLLOWING BRAHMA'S INSTRUCTIONS, AGNI WENT TO THE KHANDAVA FOREST.



JUST THEN —

OH NO!

HEAVY RAINS POURED FROM THE SKY AND HIS FIRE WAS PUT OUT.



AGNI TRIED TO REKINDLE THE FLAMES MANY TIMES BUT THE RAIN DID NOT STOP.

WHY ISN'T INDRA* LETTING ME BURN THE FOREST?

AGNI RETURNED TO BRAHMA'S ABODE AND TOLD HIM WHAT HAPPENED.

THAT IS BECAUSE INDRA'S FRIEND TAKSHAKA, THE KING OF THE NAGAS, LIVES THERE.

BUT DO NOT LOSE HOPE. WHEN THE REINCARNATIONS OF NARA AND NARAYANA* ARRIVE AT THE FOREST, SEEK THEIR HELP. YOU WILL SUCCEED THEN.

MANY YEARS LATER, NARA AND NARAYANA WERE REBORN AS ARJUNA OF THE PANDAVAS, AND KRISHNA. ONE DAY, THEY WERE RESTING IN THE KHANDAVA FOREST WHEN —

THAT MAN IS WALKING TOWARDS US.

LET US WAIT AND SEE WHAT HE WANTS.

*THE KING OF THE GODS AND THE GOD OF RAIN AND THUNDER

*THE SONS OF DHARMA AND AHIMSA, PART INCARNATIONS OF VISHNU

I NEED YOUR HELP, YOUNG PRINCES. I HAVE BEEN STARVING FOR MANY DAYS AND HAVE FINALLY FOUND MY FOOD TODAY.

PLEASE WATCH OVER ME AS I EAT.

WHAT A STRANGE REQUEST!



I MUST WARN YOU THAT IT WON'T BE EASY. I AM AGNI, THE GOD OF FIRE, AND MY MEAL IS THE ENTIRE KHANDAVA FOREST.

I NEED TO BE PROTECTED FROM INDRA, THE KING OF GODS.

WE FEAR NOBODY. WE WILL PROTECT YOU AT ANY COST.



AGNI BEGAN TO BURN DOWN THE FOREST.

ARJUNA, YOU WATCH OVER THAT SIDE. I'LL STAY HERE.

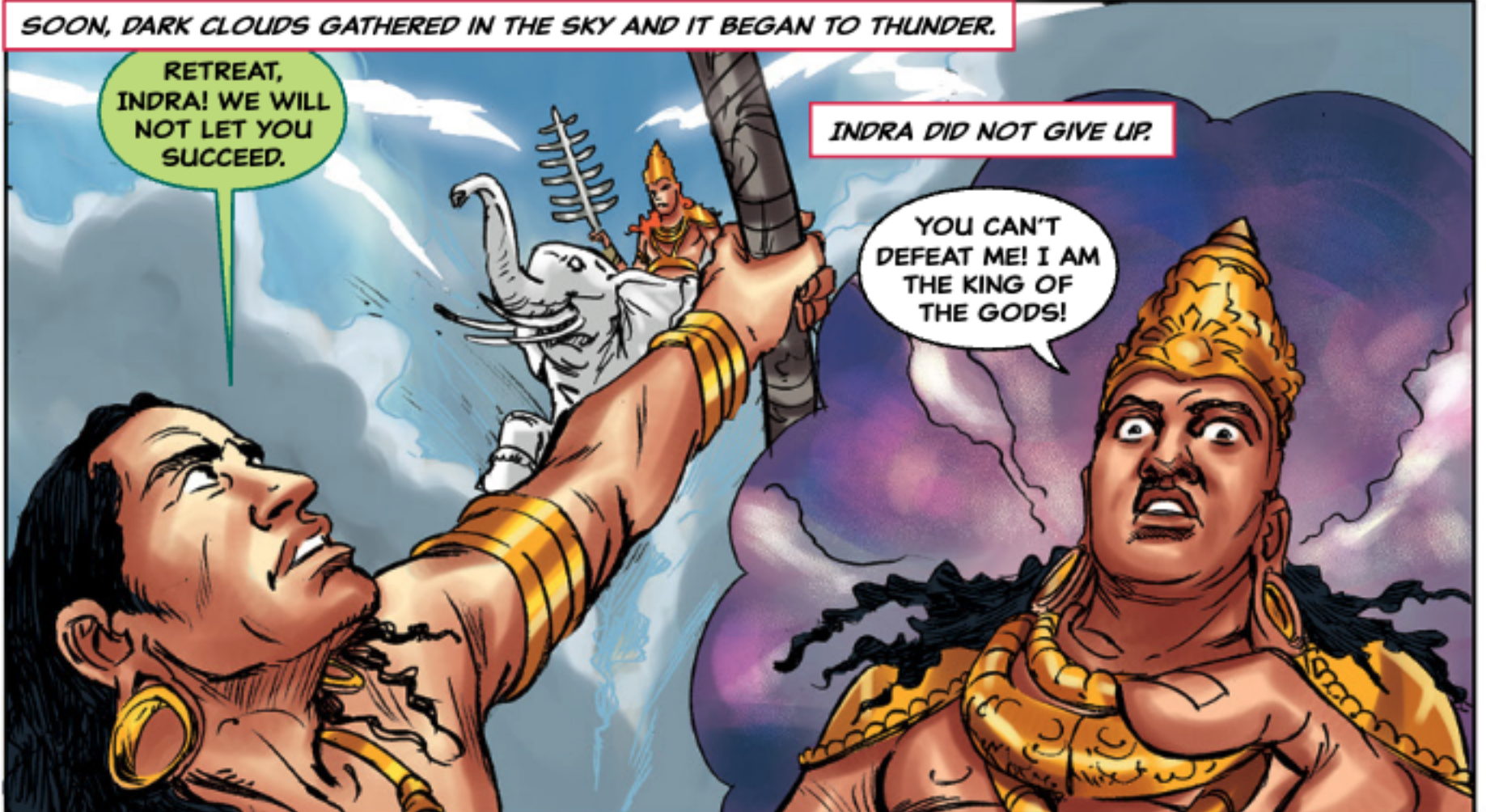


SOON, DARK CLOUDS GATHERED IN THE SKY AND IT BEGAN TO THUNDER.

RETREAT, INDRA! WE WILL NOT LET YOU SUCCEED.

INDRA DID NOT GIVE UP.

YOU CAN'T DEFEAT ME! I AM THE KING OF THE GODS!



ARJUNA AND KRISHNA TRIED WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT BUT COULD NOT DEFEAT INDRA.



THEN, AGNI INTERVENED.

I WILL SUMMON
VARUNA TO GIFT
DIVINE WEAPONS TO
THE TWO OF YOU.
THEN YOUR VICTORY
WILL BE DEFINITE.



VARUNA ARRIVED WITH DIVINE WEAPONS
FOR KRISHNA AND ARJUNA.

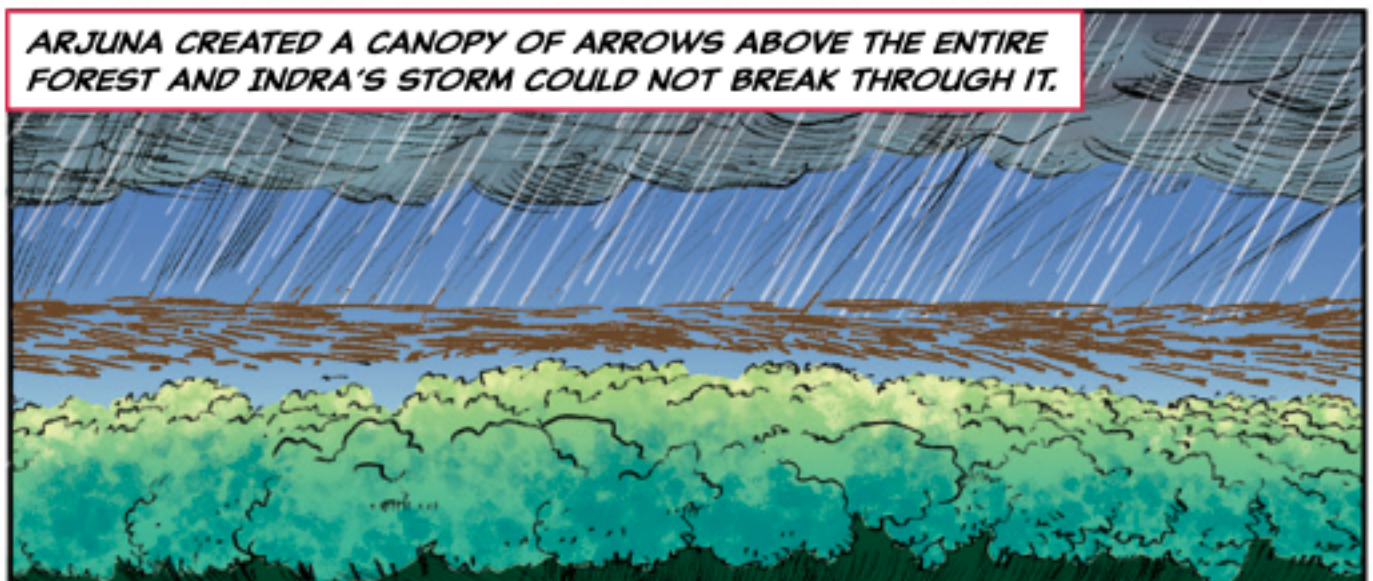


THIS TIME, WHEN
INDRA ARRIVED —

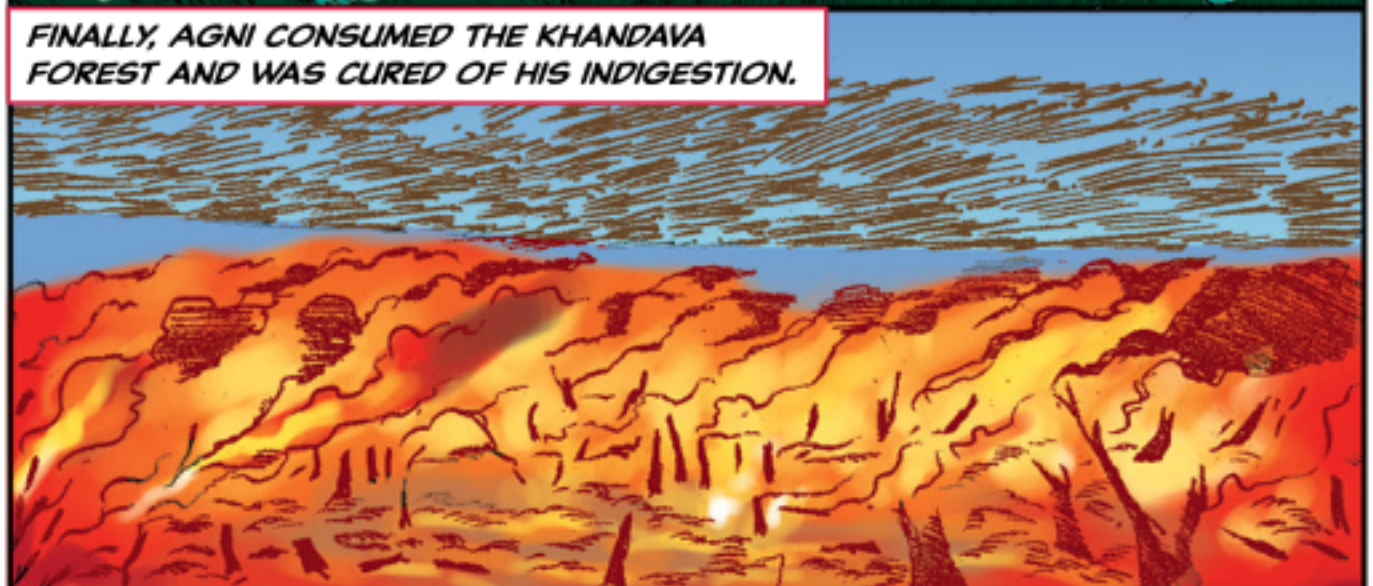
WATCH OUT,
INDRA!



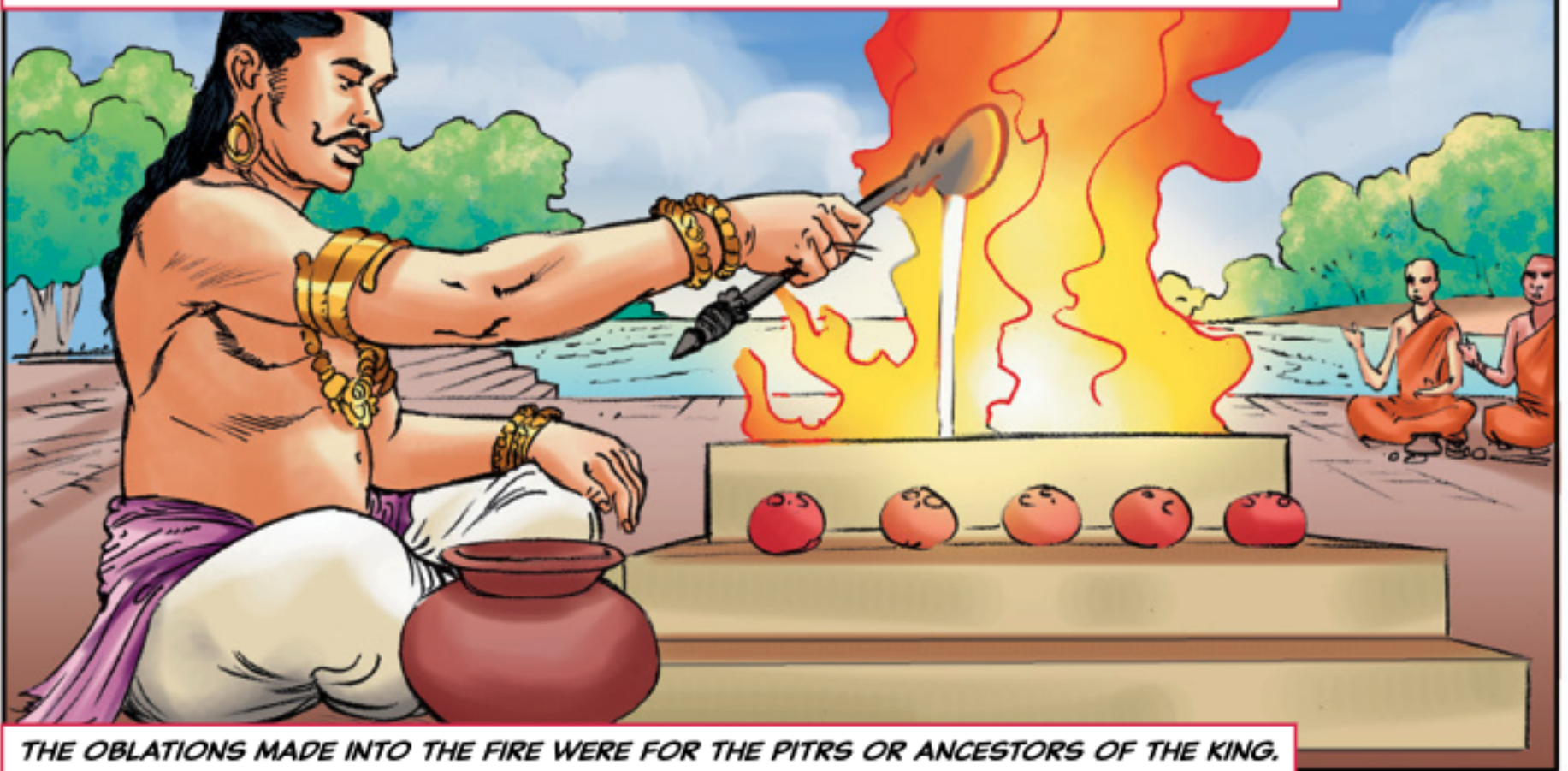
ARJUNA CREATED A CANOPY OF ARROWS ABOVE THE ENTIRE
FOREST AND INDRA'S STORM COULD NOT BREAK THROUGH IT.



FINALLY, AGNI CONSUMED THE KHANDAVA
FOREST AND WAS CURED OF HIS INDIGESTION.

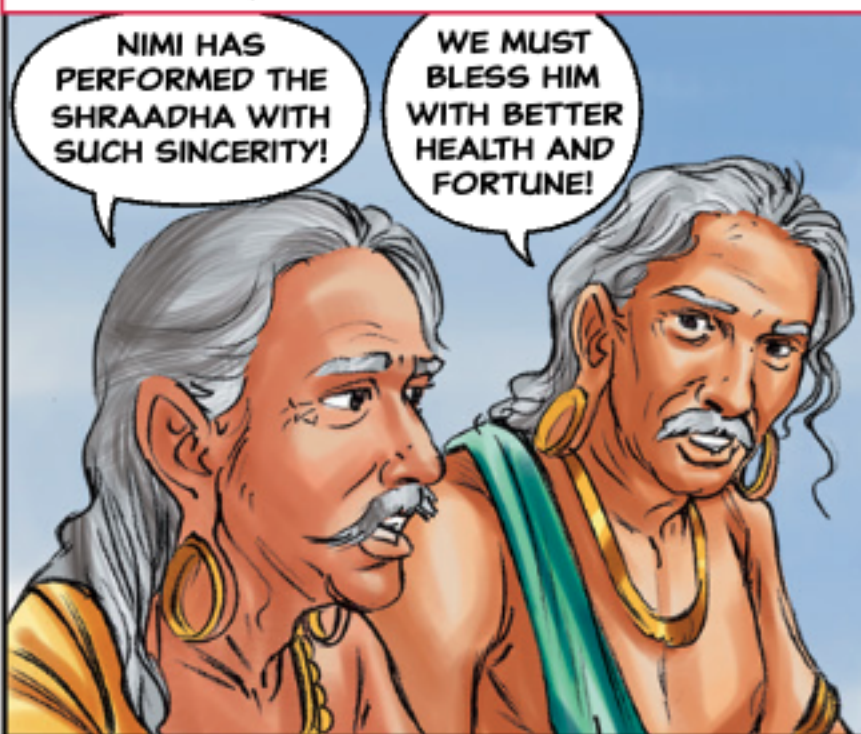


MANY YEARS LATER, A KING NAMED NIMI WAS ONCE PERFORMING A SHRAADHA* CEREMONY.



THE OBLATIONS MADE INTO THE FIRE WERE FOR THE PITRS OR ANCESTORS OF THE KING.

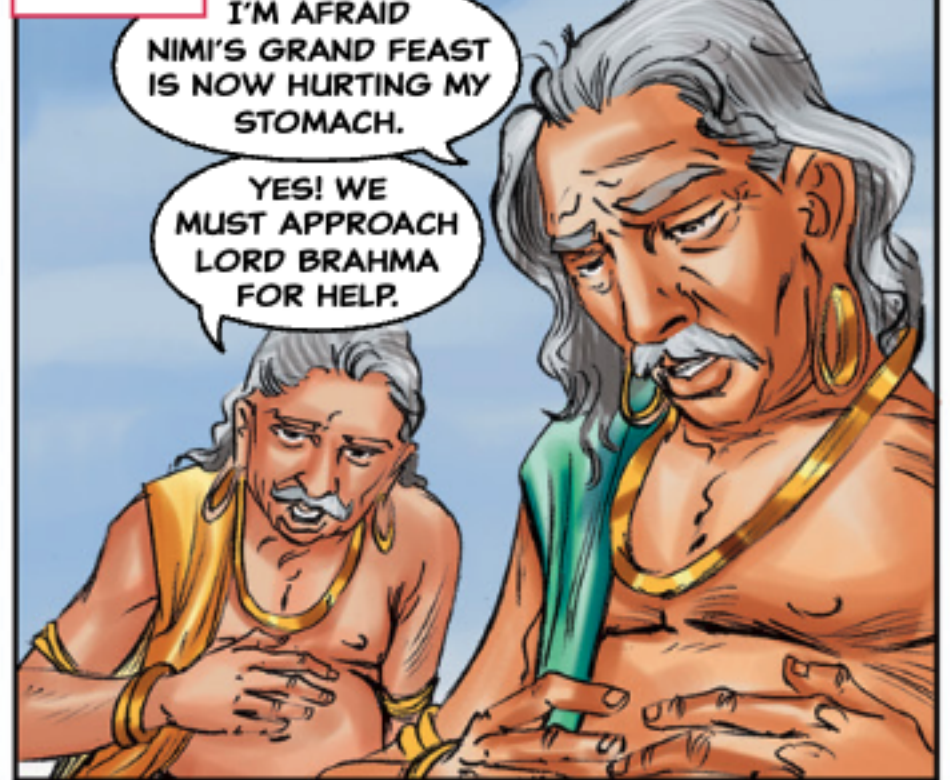
IN PITRULOKA, THE ABODE OF THE ANCESTORS —



NIMI HAS PERFORMED THE SHRAADHA WITH SUCH SINCERITY!

WE MUST BLESS HIM WITH BETTER HEALTH AND FORTUNE!

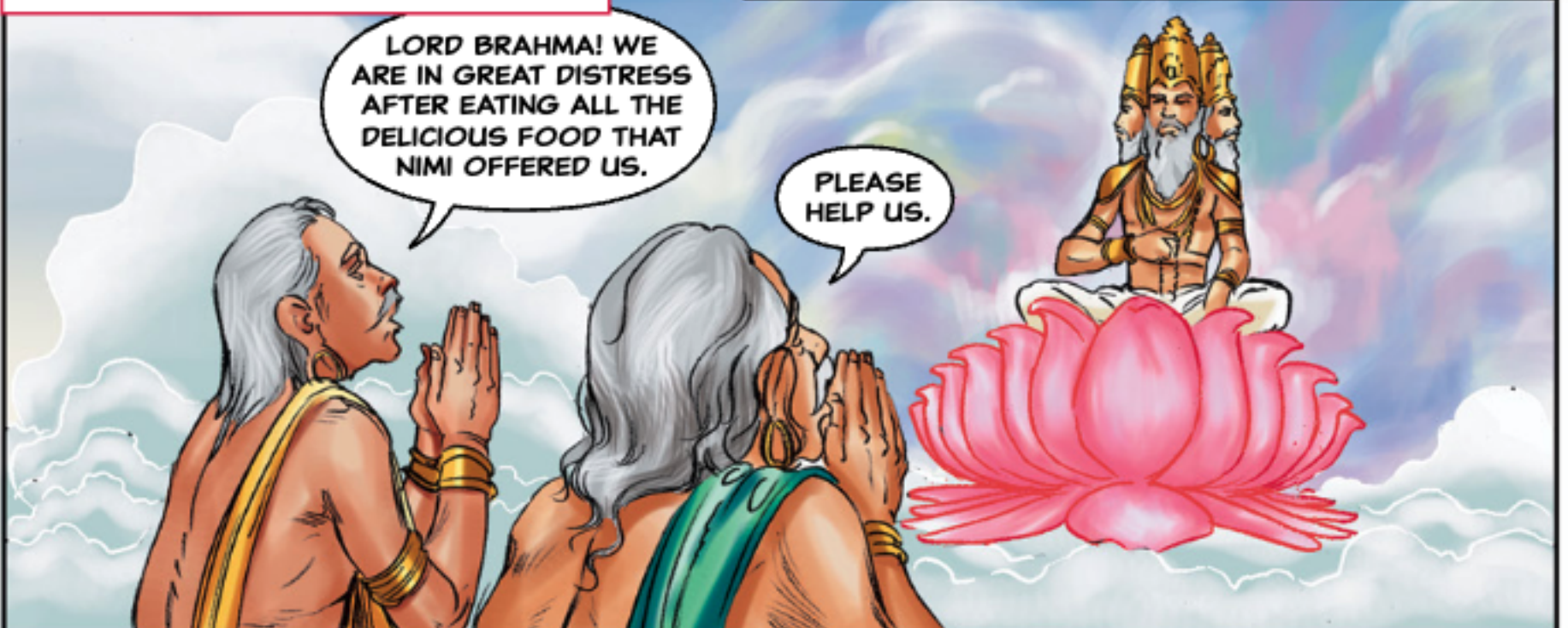
SOON —



I'M AFRAID NIMI'S GRAND FEAST IS NOW HURTING MY STOMACH.

YES! WE MUST APPROACH LORD BRAHMA FOR HELP.

THE PITRS REACHED BRAHMA'S ABODE.



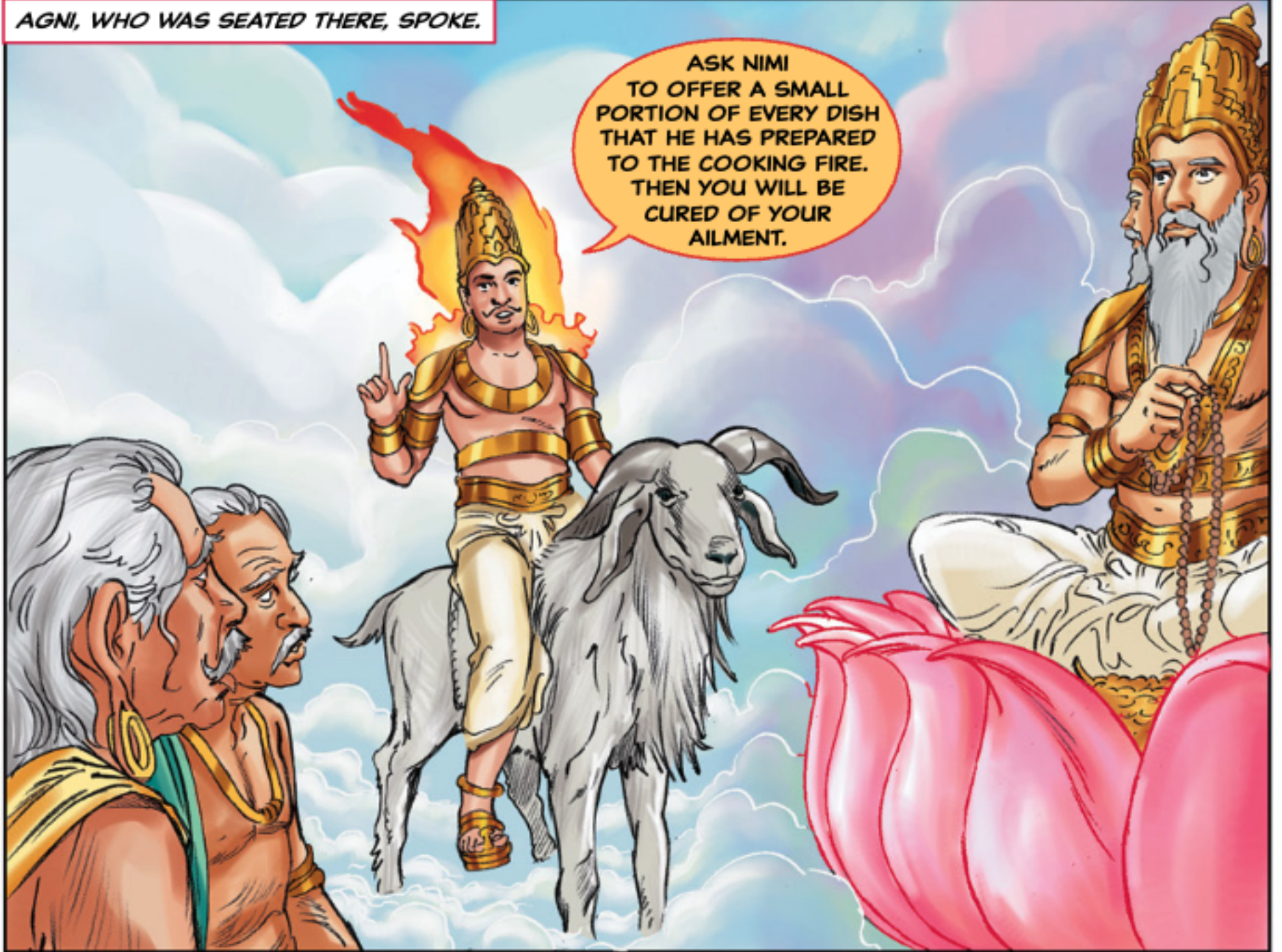
LORD BRAHMA! WE ARE IN GREAT DISTRESS AFTER EATING ALL THE DELICIOUS FOOD THAT NIMI OFFERED US.

PLEASE HELP US.

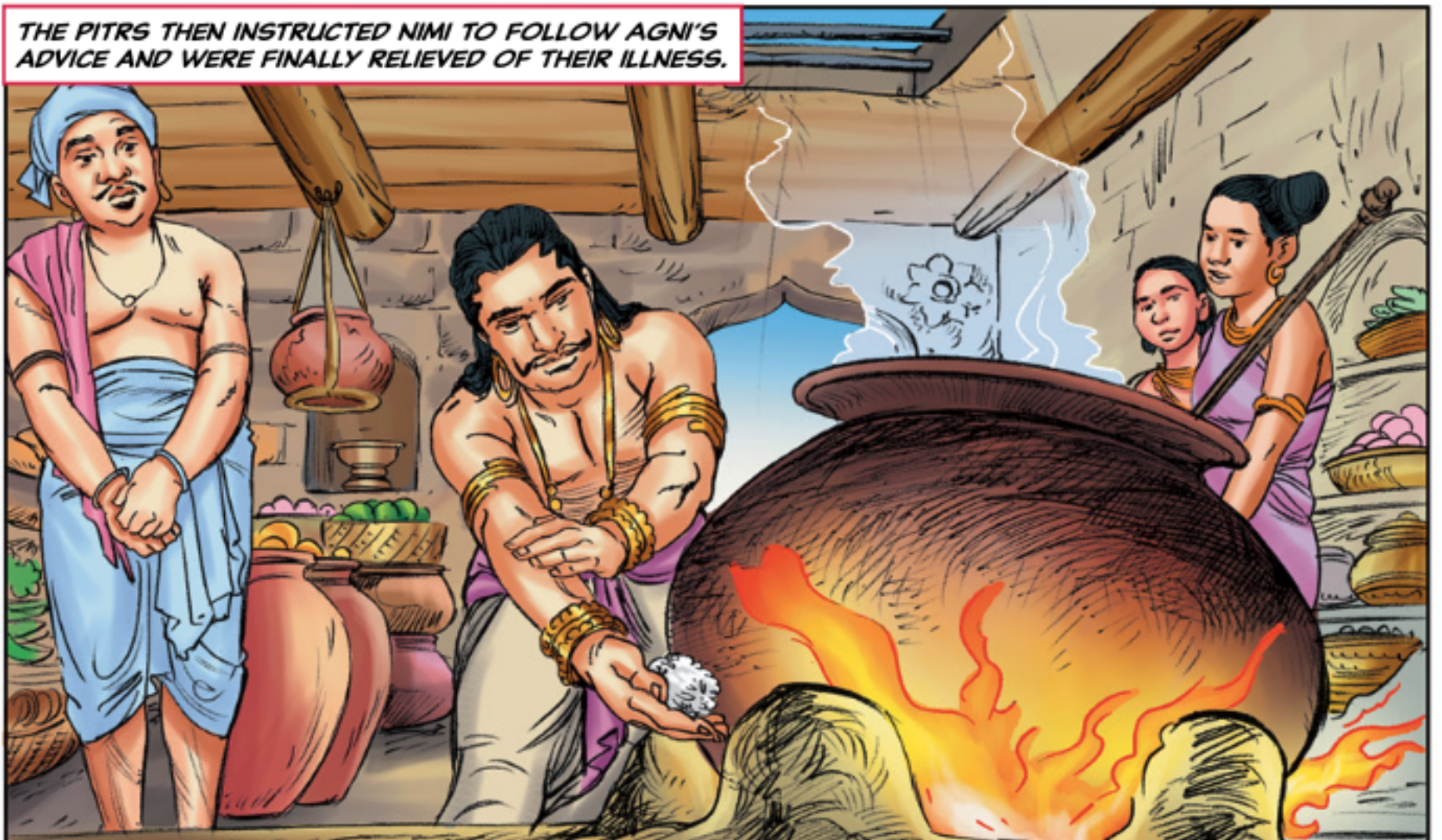
*A CEREMONY PERFORMED FOR A DEATH ANNIVERSARY

AGNI, WHO WAS SEATED THERE, SPOKE.

ASK NIMI
TO OFFER A SMALL
PORTION OF EVERY DISH
THAT HE HAS PREPARED
TO THE COOKING FIRE.
THEN YOU WILL BE
CURED OF YOUR
AILMENT.



THE PITRS THEN INSTRUCTED NIMI TO FOLLOW AGNI'S
ADVICE AND WERE FINALLY RELIEVED OF THEIR ILLNESS.



EVEN TO THIS DAY, MANY COMMUNITIES OFFER THE FIRST MORSEL OF COOKED RICE INTO THE COOKING FIRE
WITH THE BELIEF THAT AGNI WILL GUARD THEM AGAINST ANY AILMENT FROM THE FOOD THAT THEY EAT.

ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA, THE ABILITY OF A PERSON TO DIGEST FOOD IS ALSO CALLED
'AGNI'. THIS IS A REFERENCE TO THE HEAT REQUIRED IN THE STOMACH TO DIGEST FOOD.

BRIHASPATI

SAGE ANGIRAS, FAMOUS FOR HIS WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE, HAD A VISITOR ONE DAY.

YOU LOOK TROUBLED.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

IT'S MY SON,
UTATHYA,
SAGE NARADA.

HE'S A BRIGHT BOY,
BUT STRUGGLES TO FOLLOW
THE COMPLEX LESSONS I TEACH
HIM. MY OTHER STUDENTS ARE
BRIGHT TOO, BUT UNWILLING
TO WORK HARD.

WHO WILL CARRY ON ALL
THE KNOWLEDGE I'VE
COLLECTED OVER
THE YEARS?

HAVE YOU
FORGOTTEN?
AGNI EAGERLY
WAITS TO GIVE
YOU A BOON.

WHEN YOUR ANGER ONCE
BLAZED BRIGHTER THAN
AGNI'S FLAMES...

...HE RETIRED INTO THE FOREST, FEELING DEFEATED.

AGNI DEVA,
WAIT!

"YOU PROMISED TO ALWAYS REMAIN SECOND TO HIM
AND NEVER SURPASS HIM. AGNI WAS PLEASED."

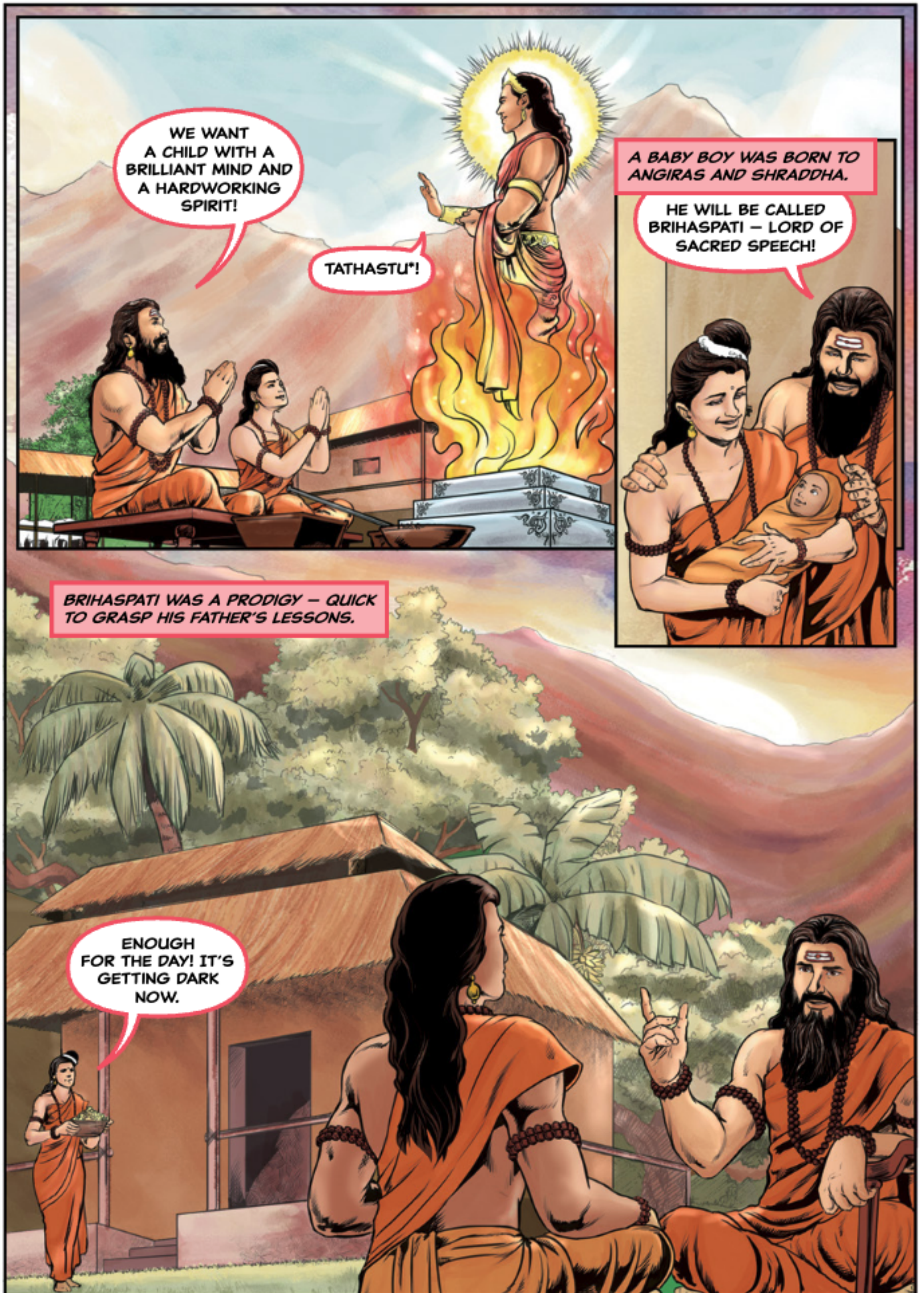
ASK ME FOR ANY
BOON YOU DESIRE,
ANGIRAS!

I WILL,
WHEN
THE TIME
COMES.

I SHALL
DO A YAGNA
FOR HIM RIGHT
AWAY!

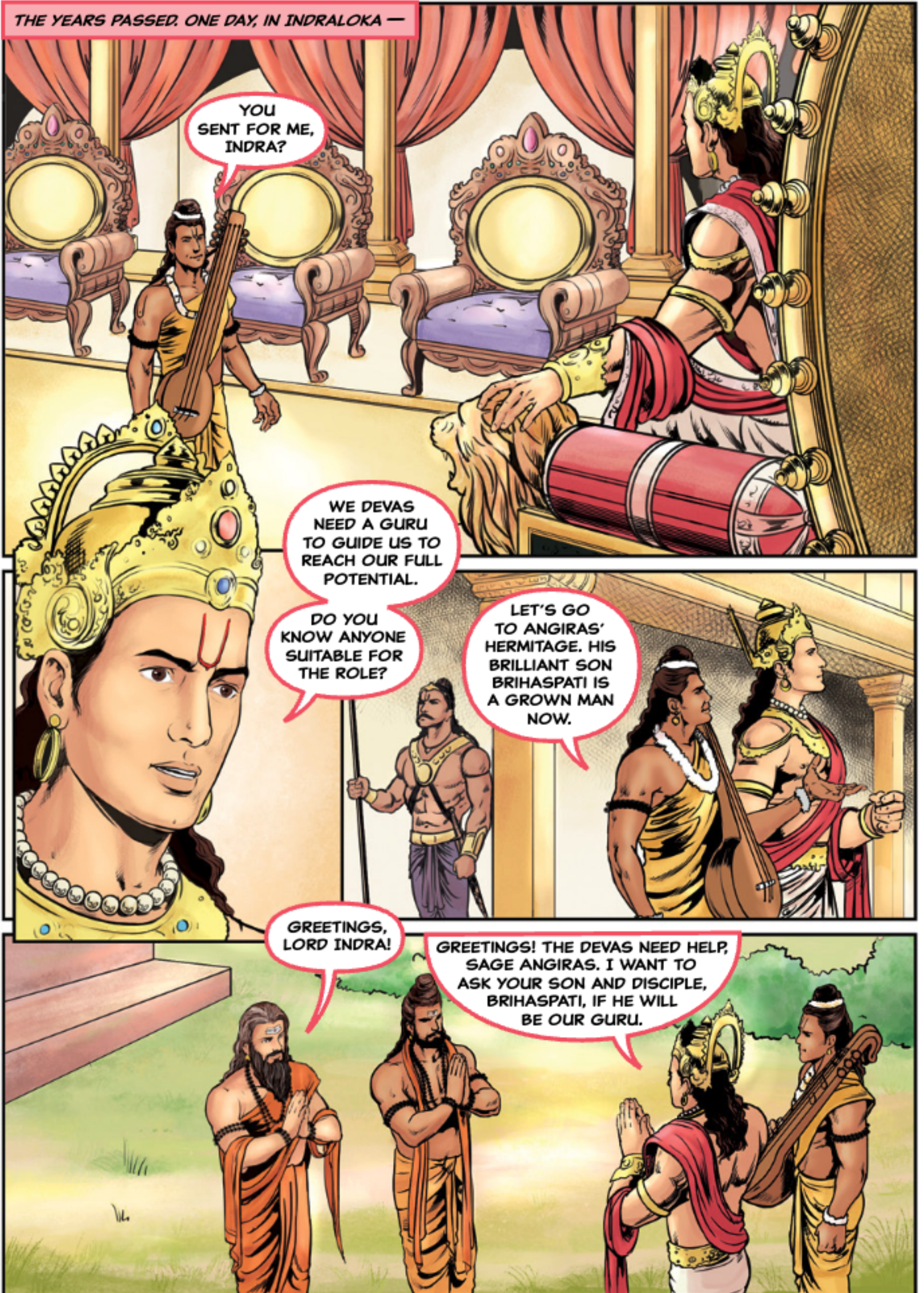
ALONG WITH HIS WIFE, SHRADDHA,
ANGIRAS PERFORMED THE YAGNA,
AND AGNI APPEARED BEFORE THEM.

WHAT CAN
I FINALLY GIVE
YOU, GREAT
SAGE?



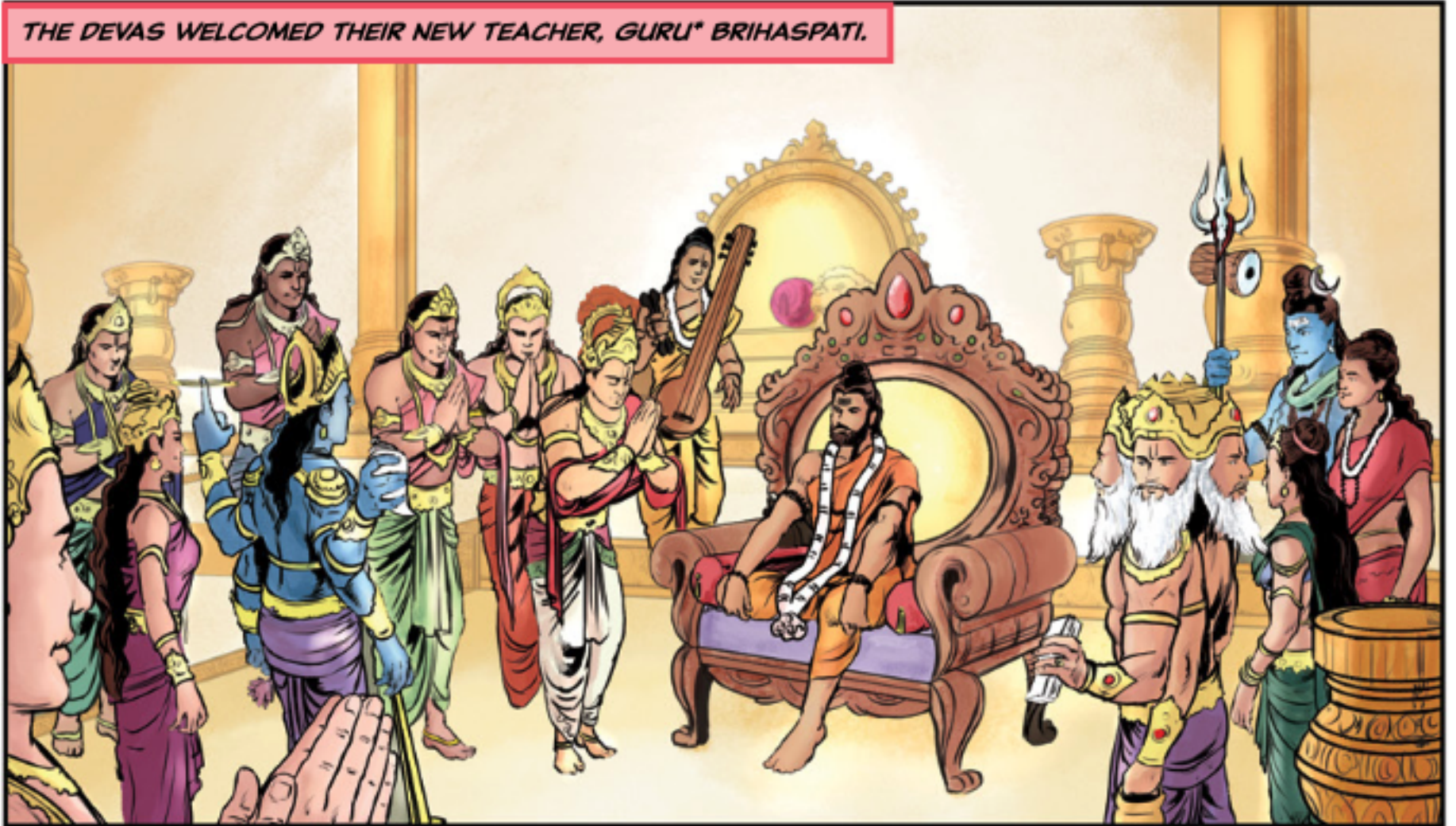
*SO IT SHALL BE

THE YEARS PASSED. ONE DAY, IN INDRALOKA —

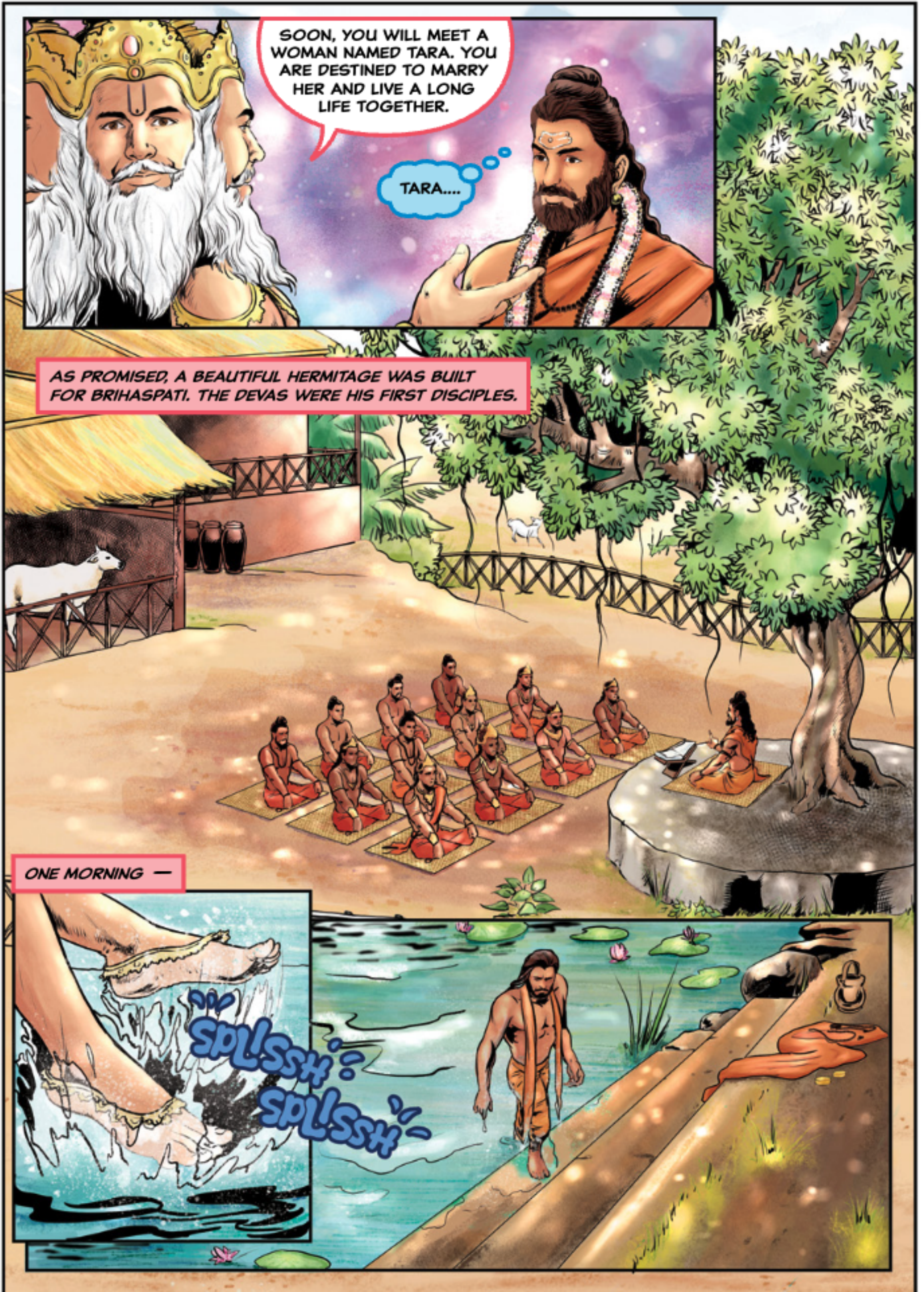


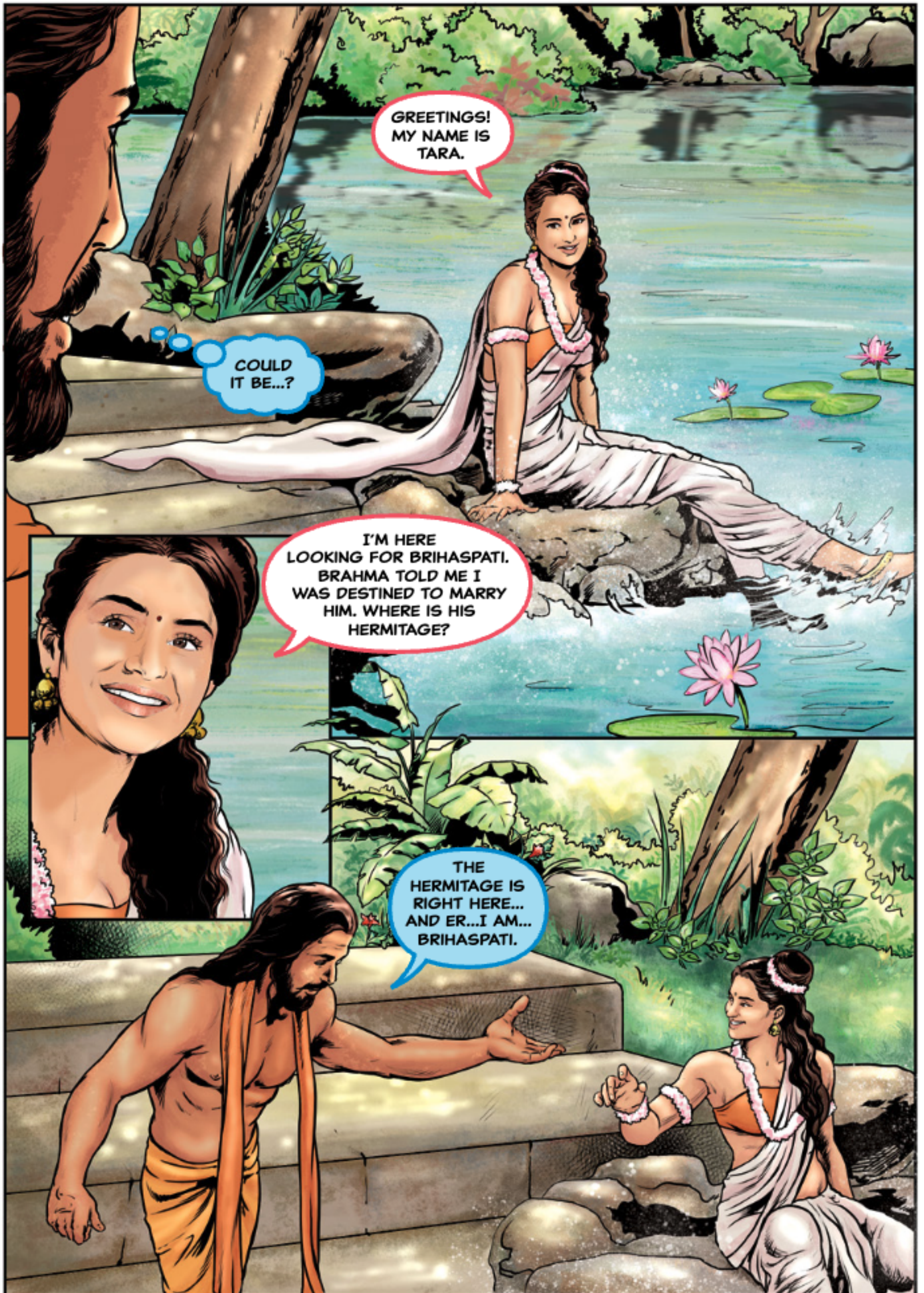


THE DEVAS WELCOMED THEIR NEW TEACHER, GURU* BRIHASPATI.

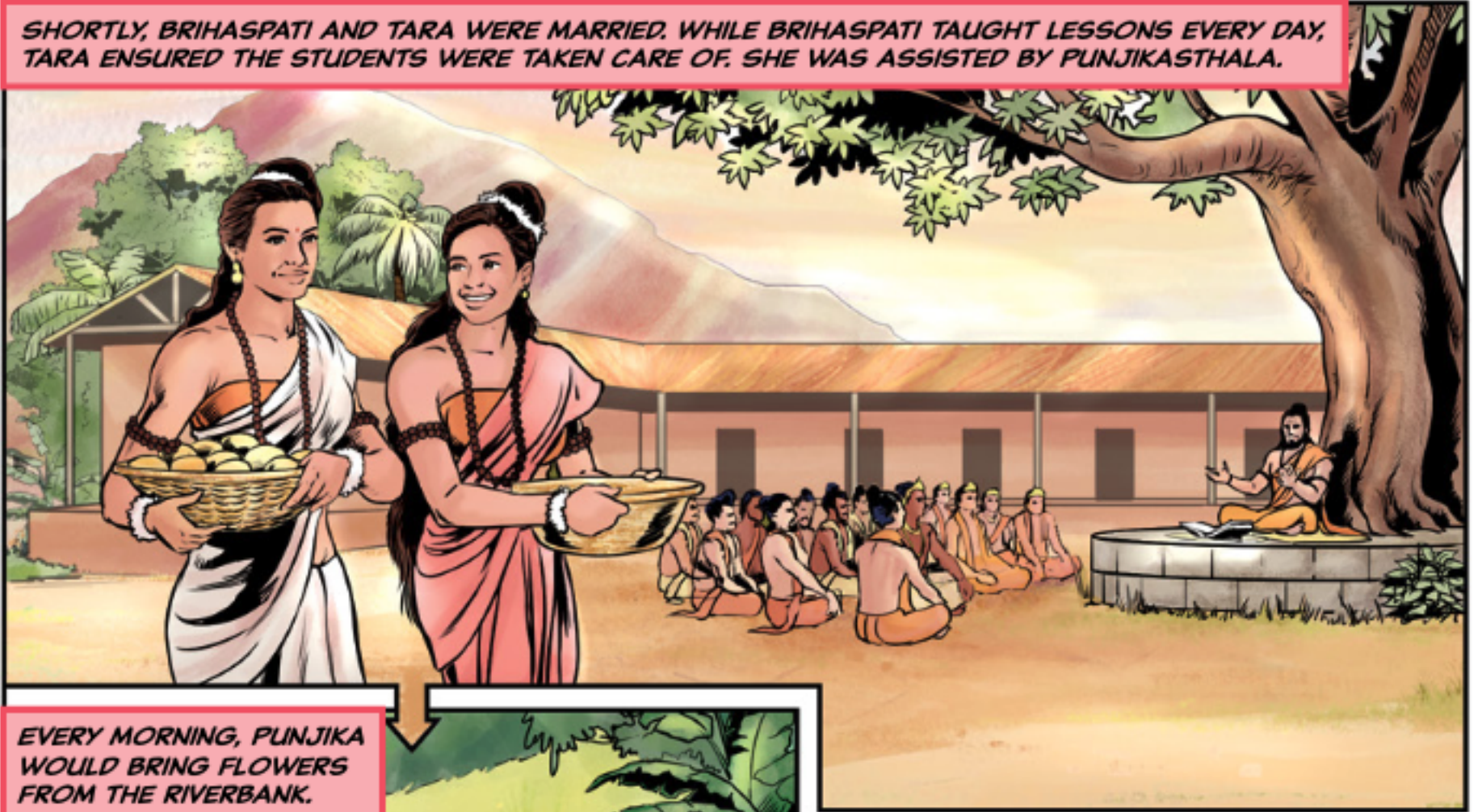


*BRIHASPATI IS ALSO KNOWN AS GURU BECAUSE HE IS THE TEACHER OF THE DEVAS.

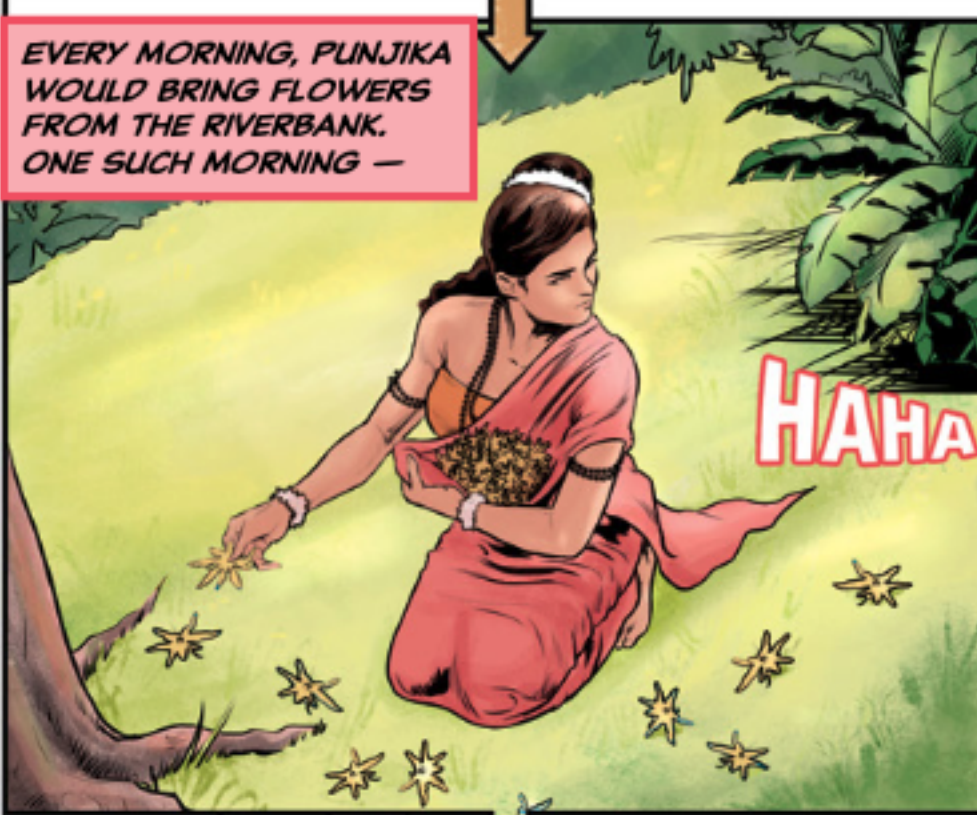




SHORTLY, BRIHASPATI AND TARA WERE MARRIED. WHILE BRIHASPATI TAUGHT LESSONS EVERY DAY, TARA ENSURED THE STUDENTS WERE TAKEN CARE OF. SHE WAS ASSISTED BY PUNJIKASTHALA.

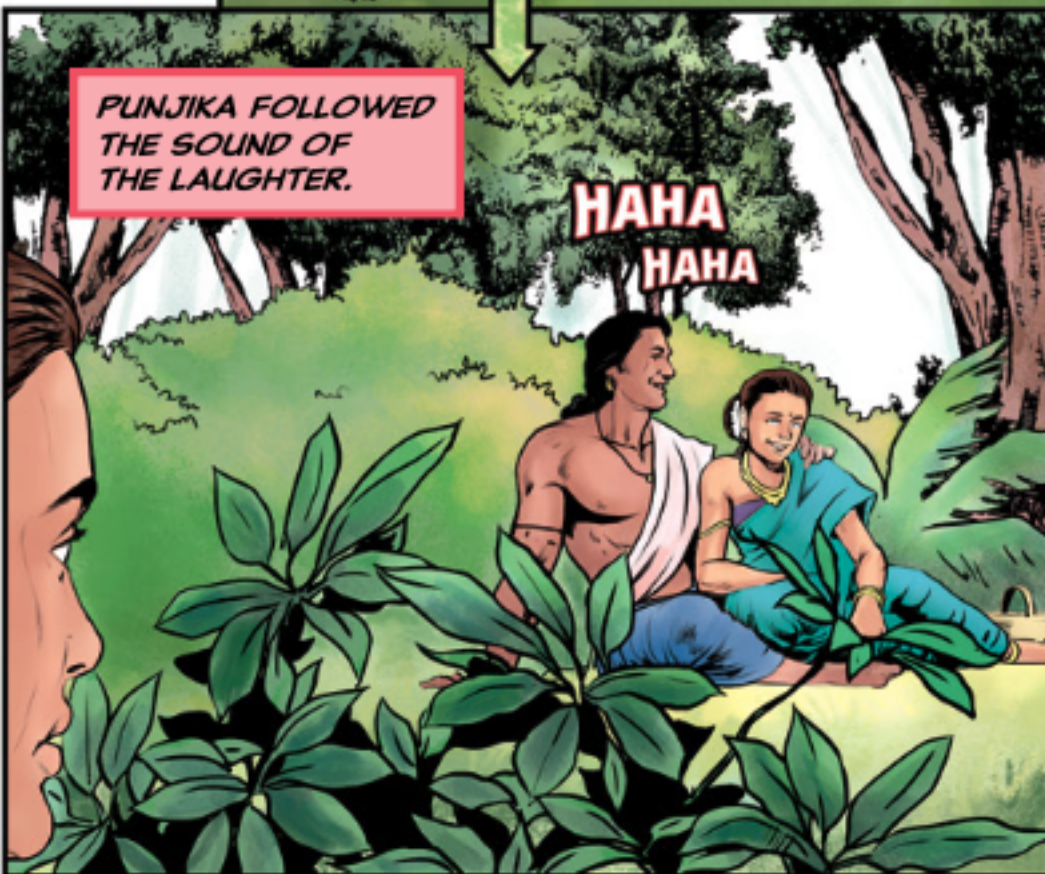


EVERY MORNING, PUNJIKA WOULD BRING FLOWERS FROM THE RIVERBANK. ONE SUCH MORNING —



I WISH SOMEONE WOULD LOVE ME LIKE THAT! HOW WONDERFUL IT WOULD BE!

PUNJIKA FOLLOWED THE SOUND OF THE LAUGHTER.



HER MIND WAS FILLED WITH THE SIGHT OF THE LOVERS SHE HAD SEEN.

WHEN SHE RETURNED —

FINALLY!
WHAT TOOK YOU
SO LONG TODAY,
PUNJKA?

WELL....

GIVE ME THE
FLOWERS QUICKLY.
TODAY'S POOJA IS
A LONG ONE.

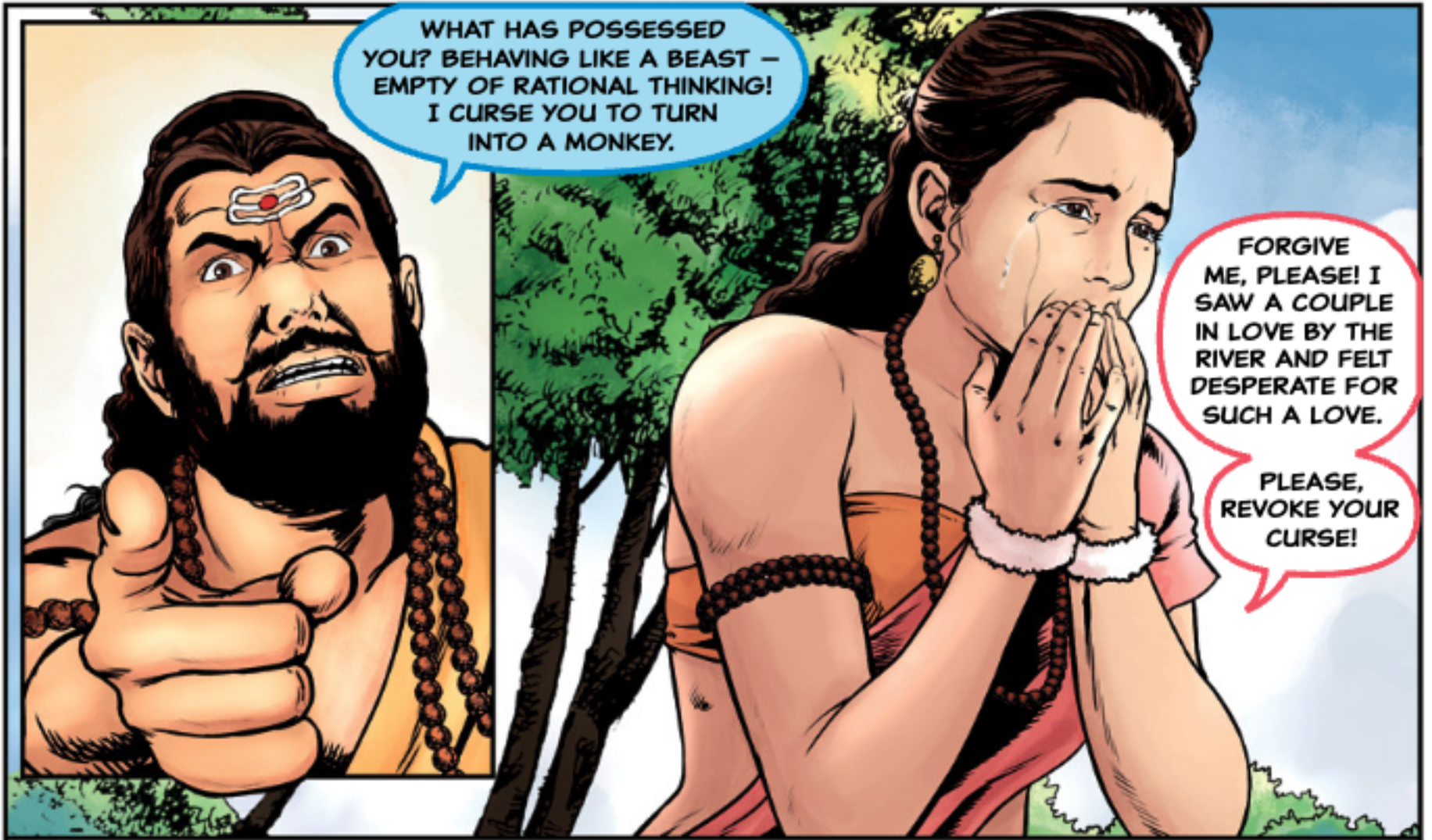
I SERVE
YOU WITH SUCH
DEVOTION. YET
YOU NEVER LOOK
AT ME.

WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?

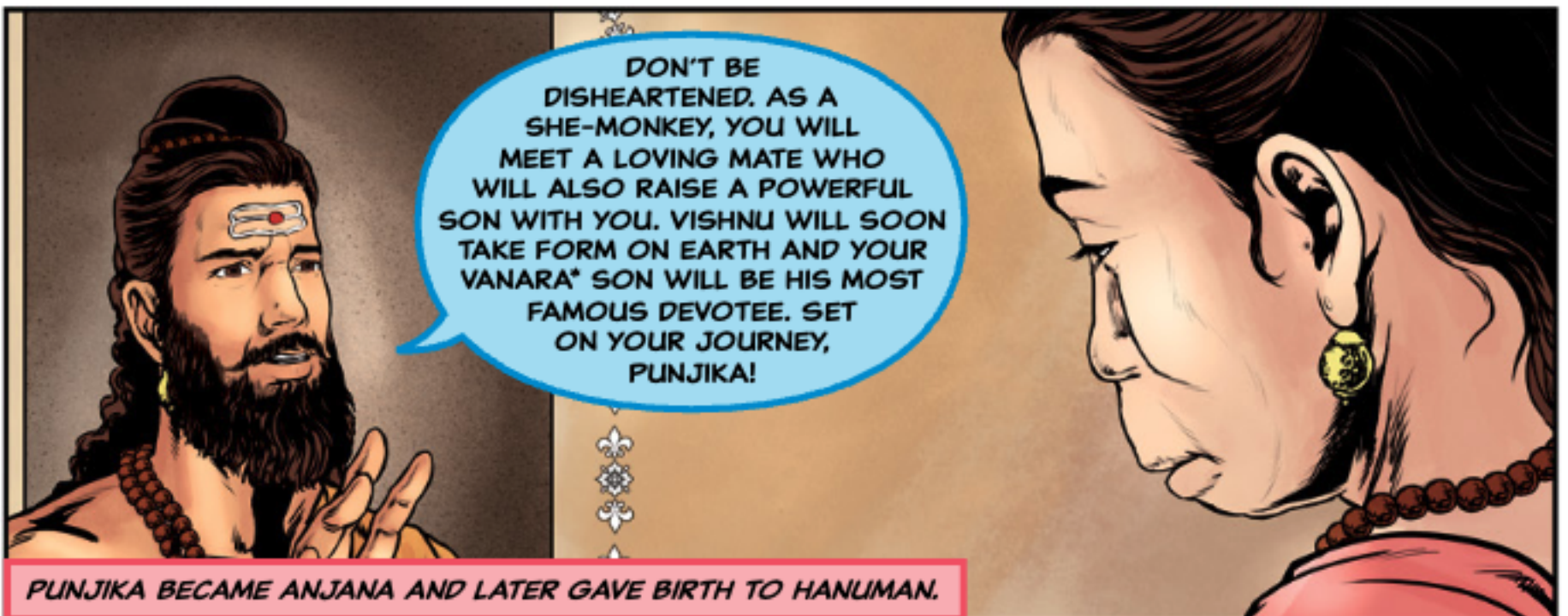
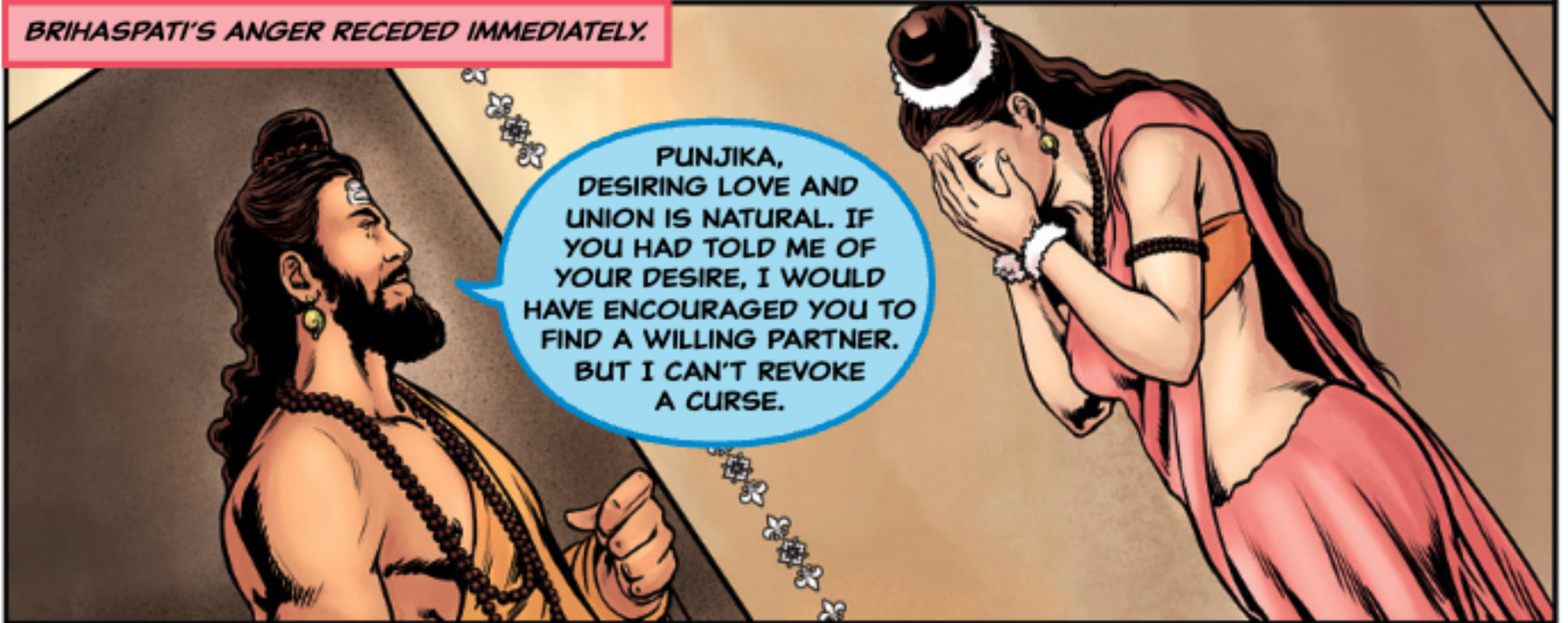
DO YOU
NOT RECOGNISE
THE LOVE IN MY
SERVICE?

STAY
AWAY, I
SAID!

AH!

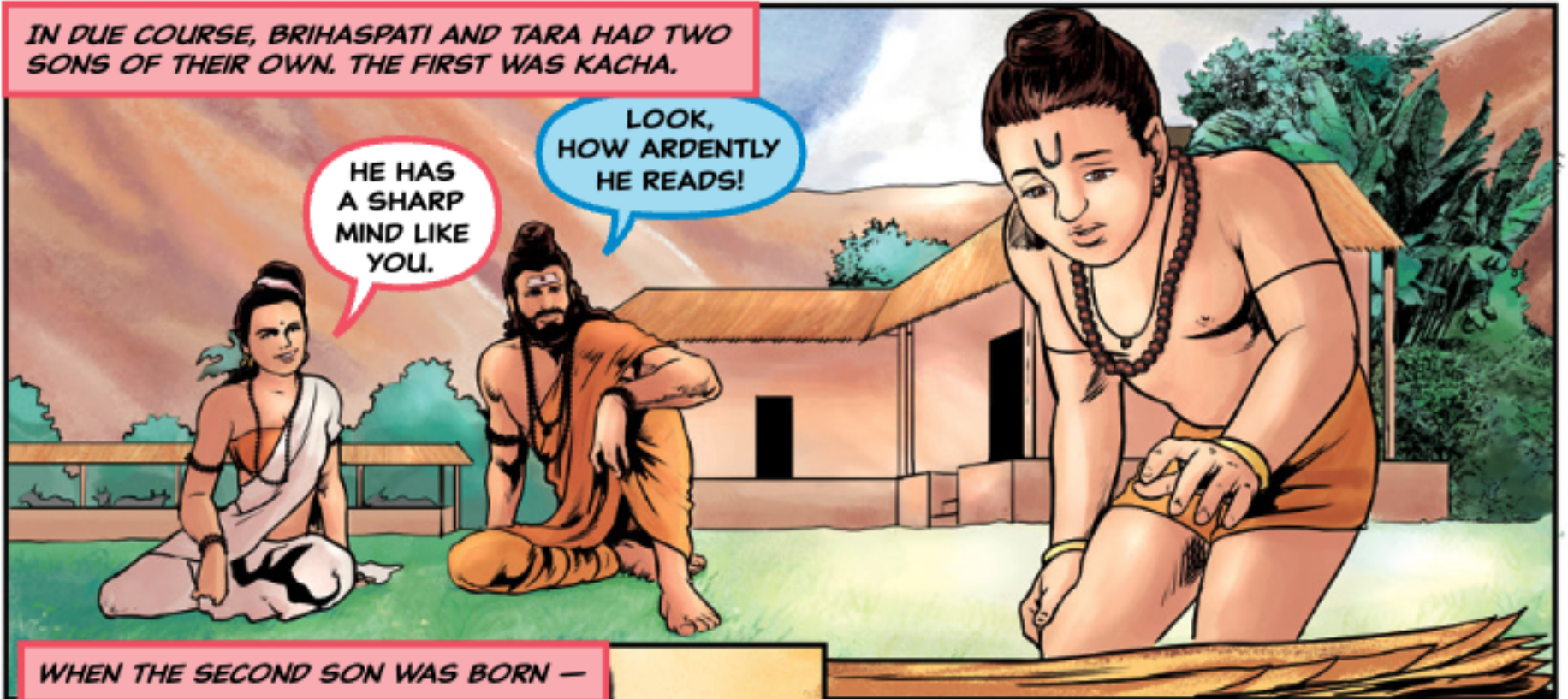


BRIHASPATI'S ANGER RECEDED IMMEDIATELY.

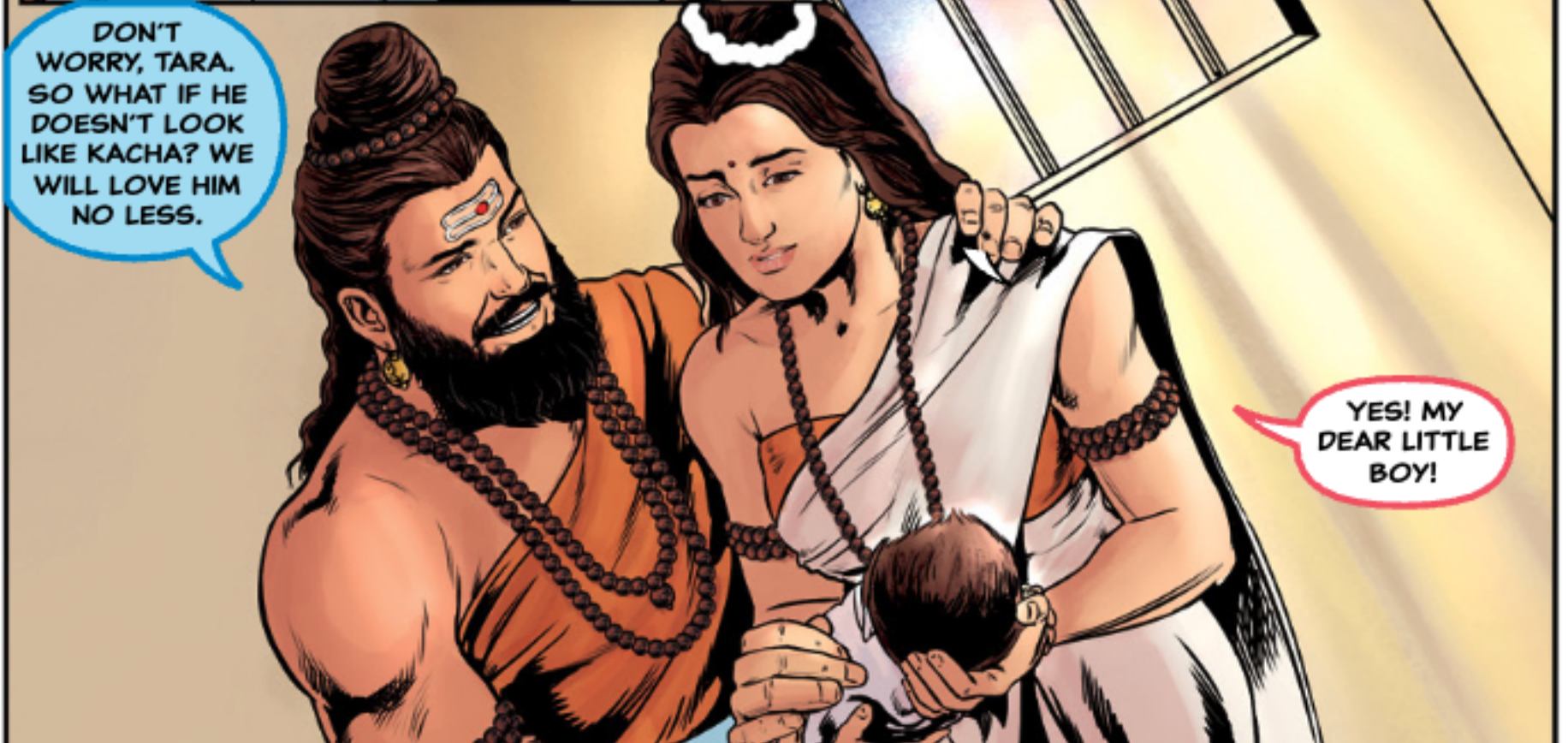
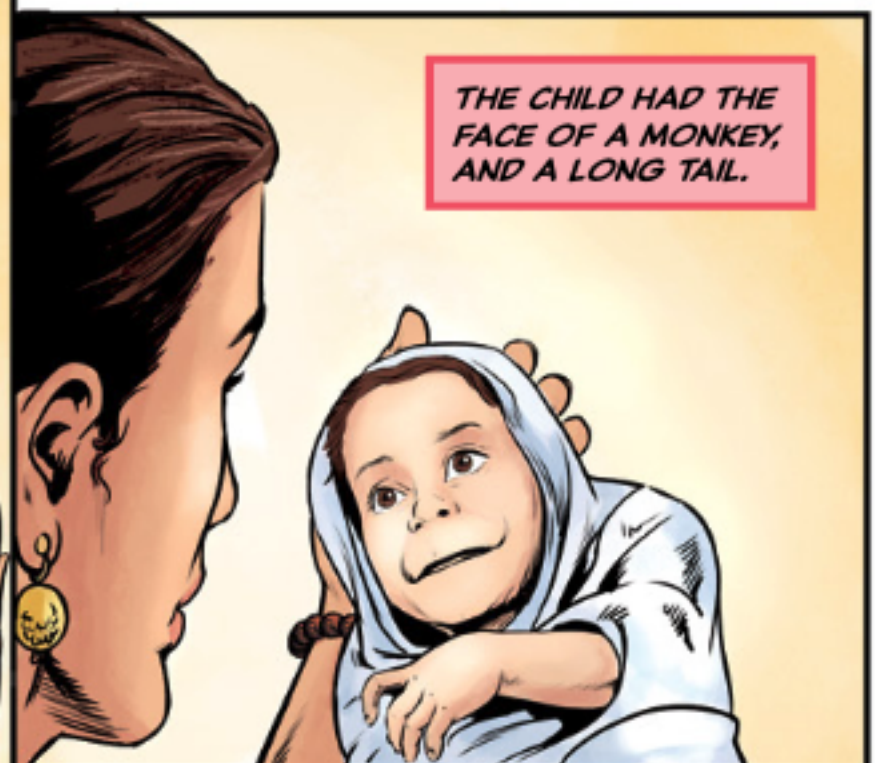


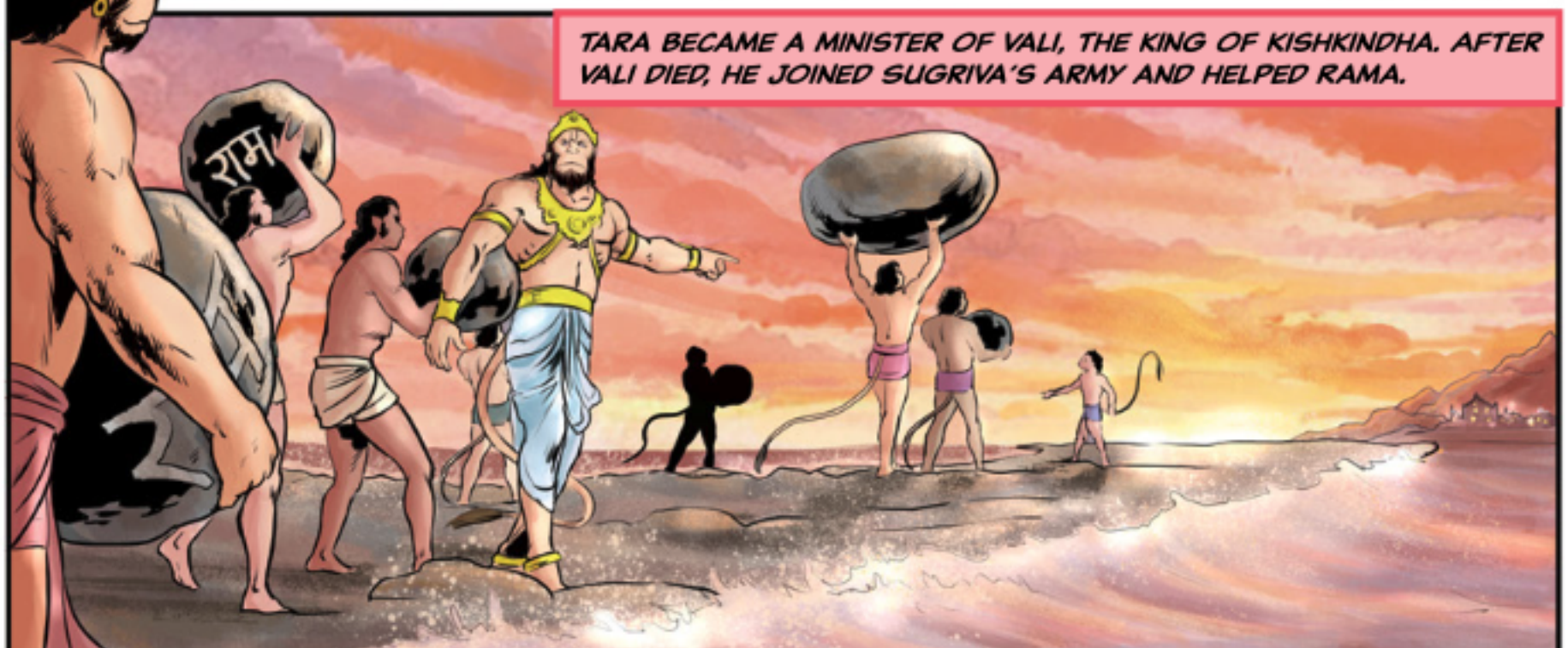
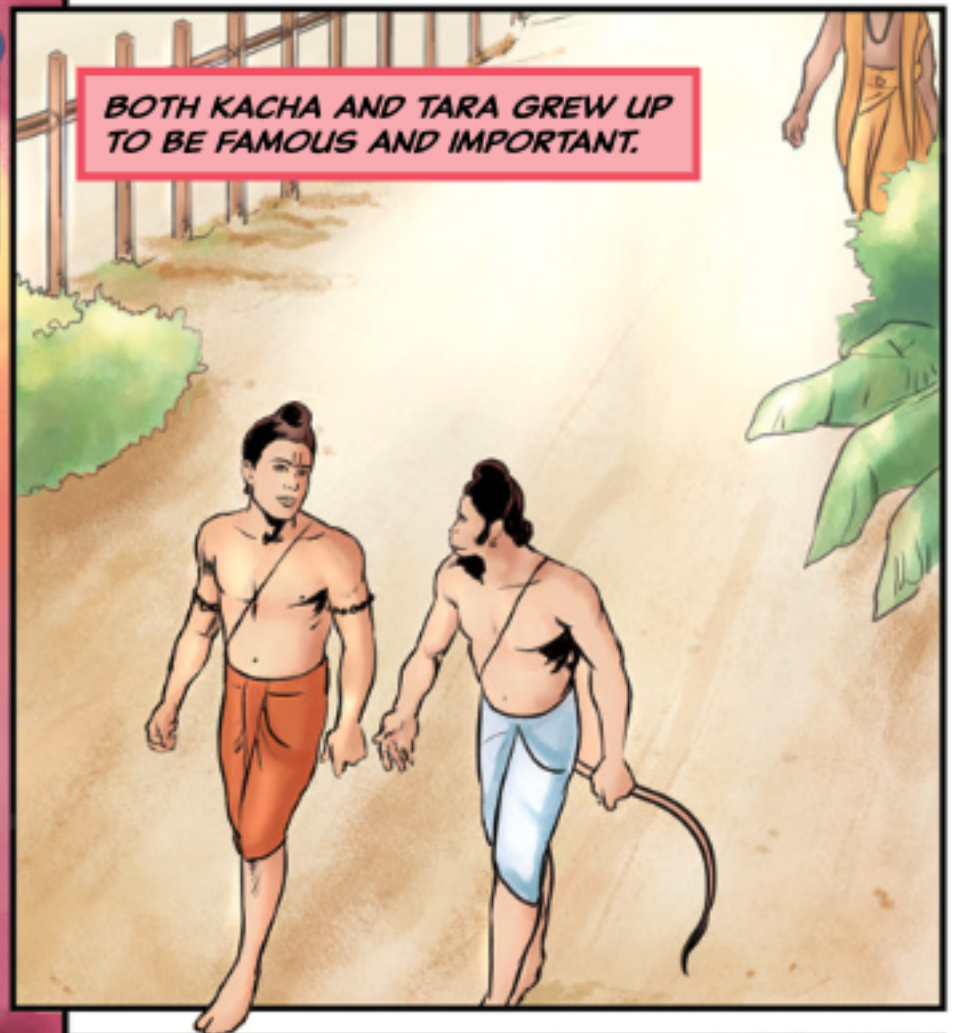
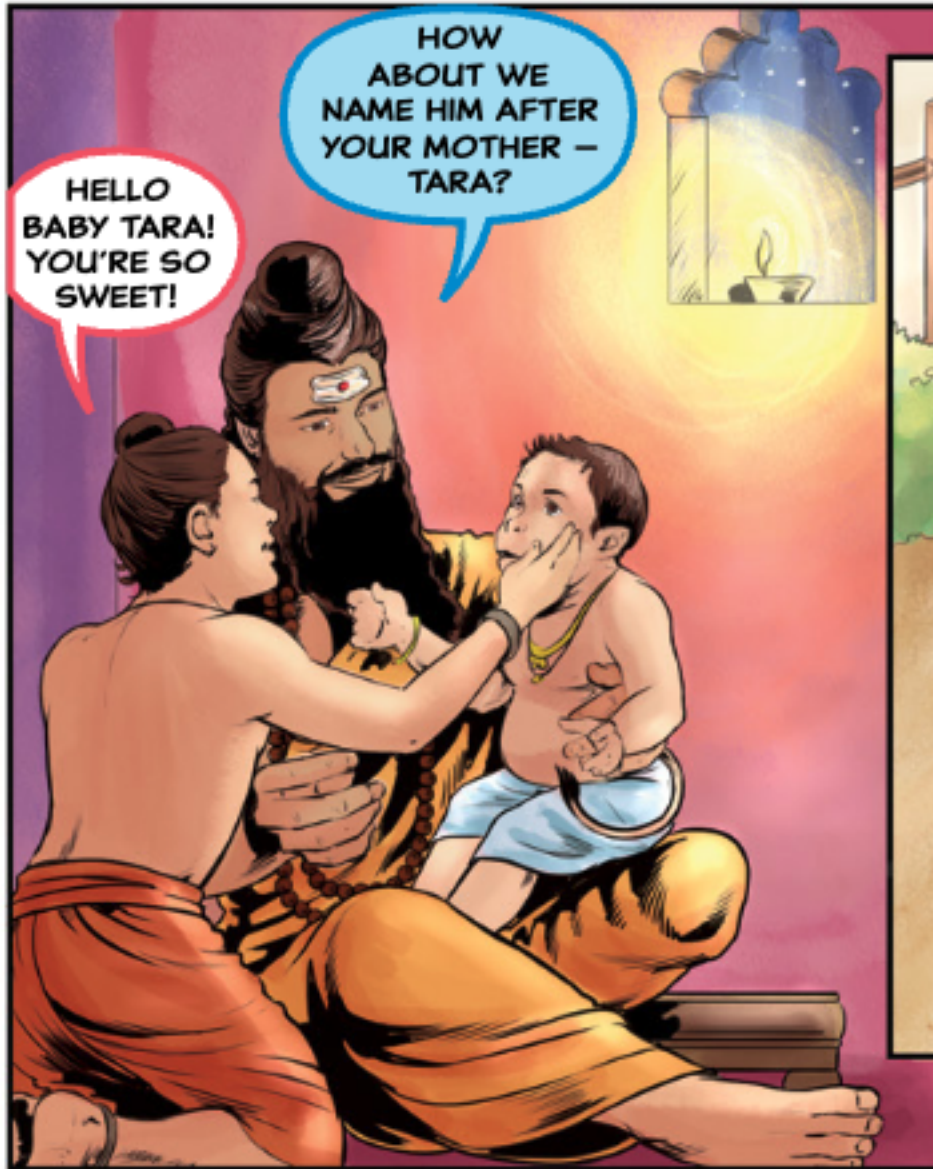
*A RACE OF FOREST-DWELLING PEOPLE

IN DUE COURSE, BRIHASPATI AND TARA HAD TWO SONS OF THEIR OWN. THE FIRST WAS KACHA.



WHEN THE SECOND SON WAS BORN —





*A SACRED CHANT THAT IS BELIEVED TO BRING THE DEAD BACK TO LIFE

BESIDES BEING THE PRECEPTOR OF THE DEVAS, BRIHASPATI IS ALSO ONE OF THE NAVAGRAHAS. HOW THESE 'NAVA' 'GRAHA' OR NINE PLANETS MOVE ARE BELIEVED TO DECIDE THE FATE OF HUMAN BEINGS.



Script: Niranjana S.
Art: Shivam Pathania

EACH NAVAGRAHA IS ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICULAR GEMS, TREES, PRECIOUS METALS, TASTES, ZODIAC SIGNS AND ANCIENT KINGDOMS. BRIHASPATI PRESIDES OVER THE FOLLOWING:



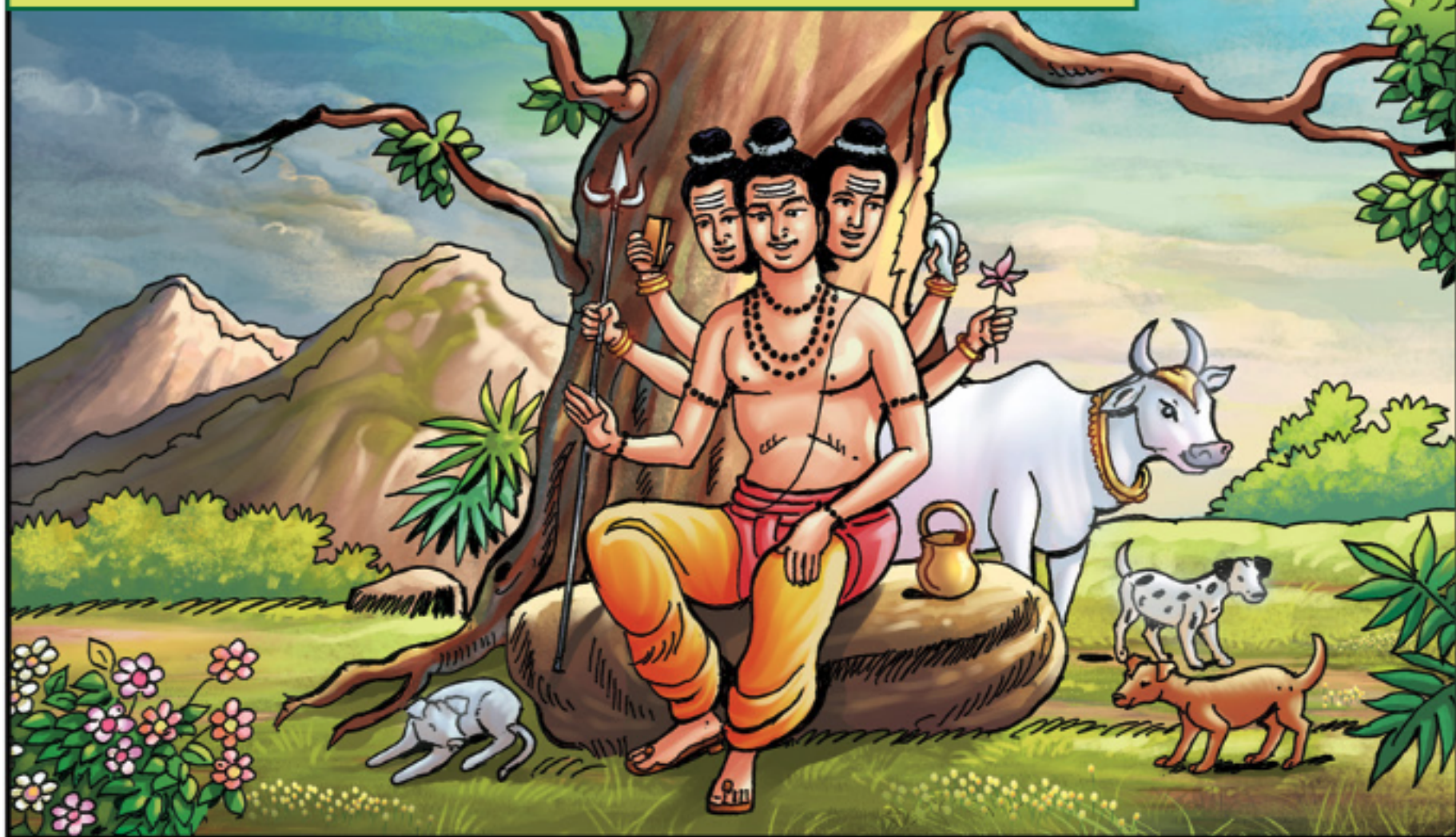
IN THE APATHSAHAYEESHWARAR* TEMPLE — A TEMPLE FOR SHIVA, AT ALANGUDI, TAMIL NADU, THERE IS A DEDICATED SHRINE TO BRIHASPATI OR GURU. THE TOWN IS ALSO CALLED GURUSTHALAM, AFTER THE DEITY OF THIS SHRINE.

*THE LORD WHO RESCUES PEOPLE FROM DISTRESS

Script: Niranjana S.
Art: Tithee Dixit

DATTATREYA

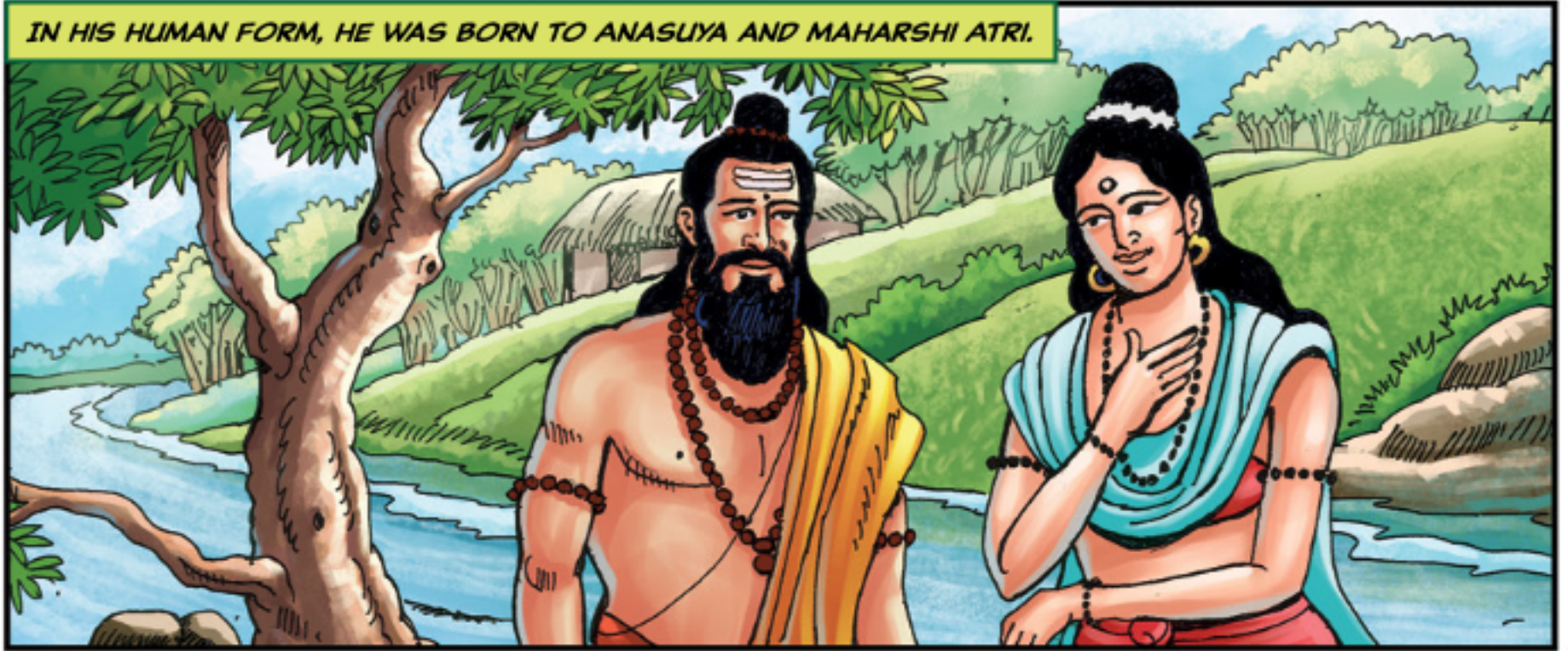
ACCORDING TO THE SKANDA PURANA, DATTATREYA CAME INTO BEING AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME. TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM, HE IS BOTH GOD AND GURU.



HE IS PARAMBRAHMAN OR THE FORMLESS FORCE THAT FILLS THE EARTH, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING BEYOND IT.



IN HIS HUMAN FORM, HE WAS BORN TO ANASUYA AND MAHARSHI ATRI.



ANASUYA WAS A LEARNED AND PIOUS WOMAN WHO WAS DEVOTED TO HER HUSBAND. IT WAS HER GREATEST WISH THAT THE TRINITY OF BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA BE BORN AS HER CHILDREN.



ONE DAY, THE SAGE NARADA TOOK AN IRON BALL, THE SIZE OF A GRAM, TO SARASWATI.

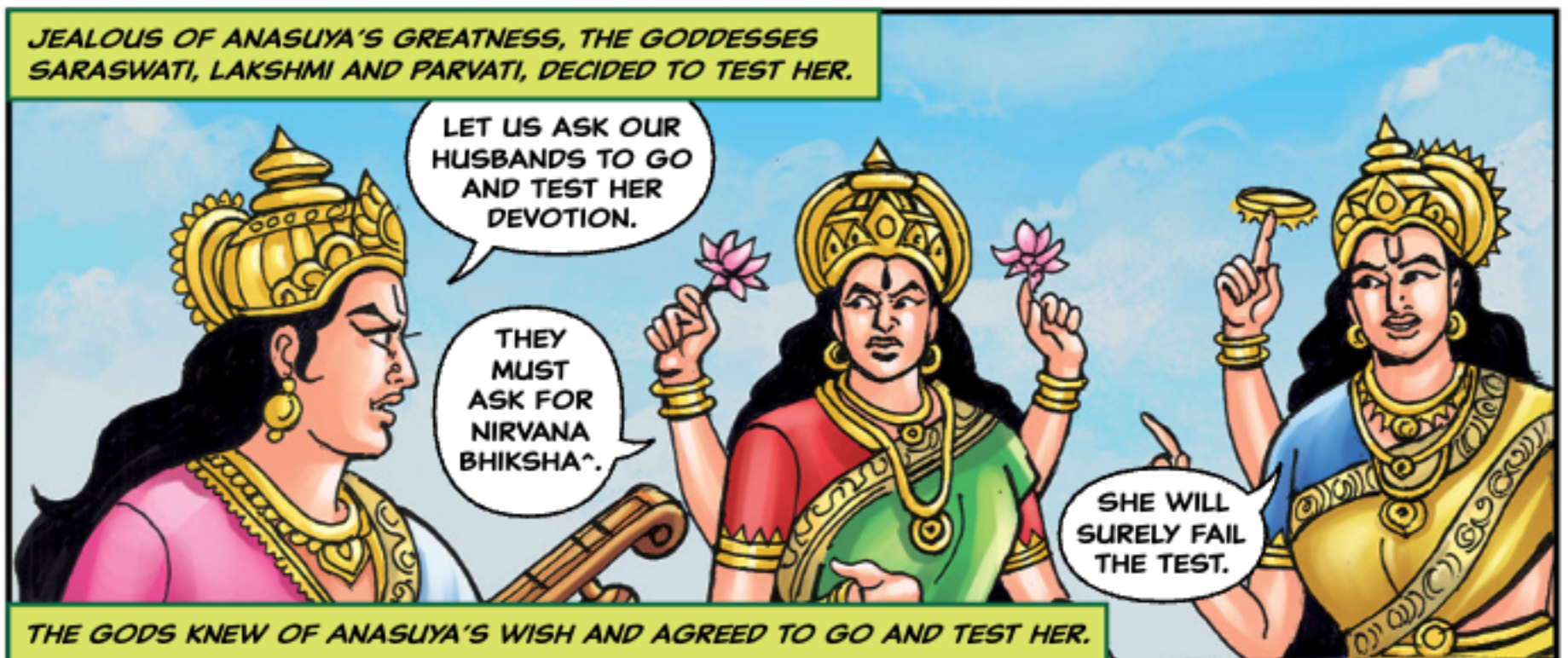
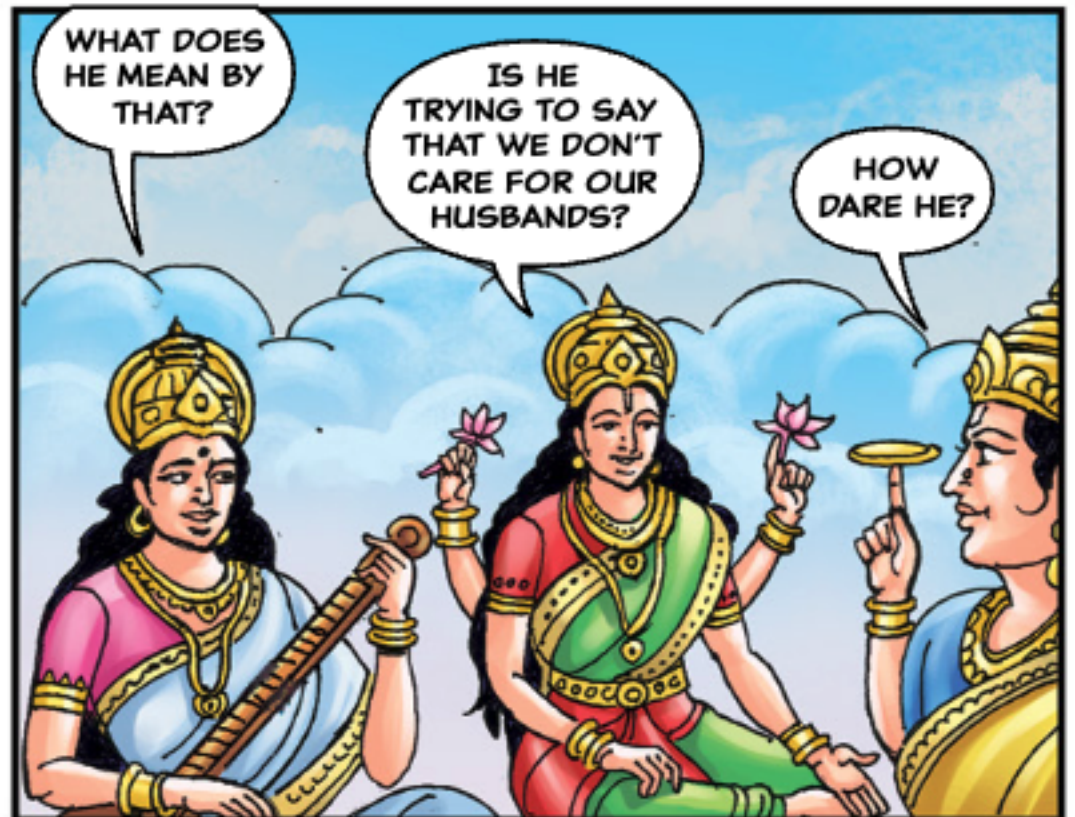
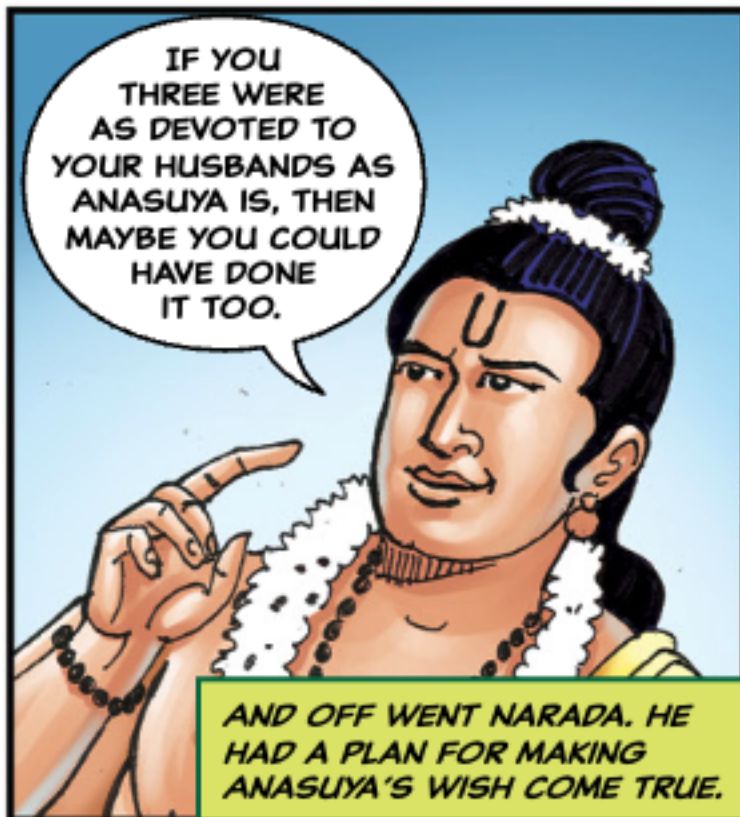
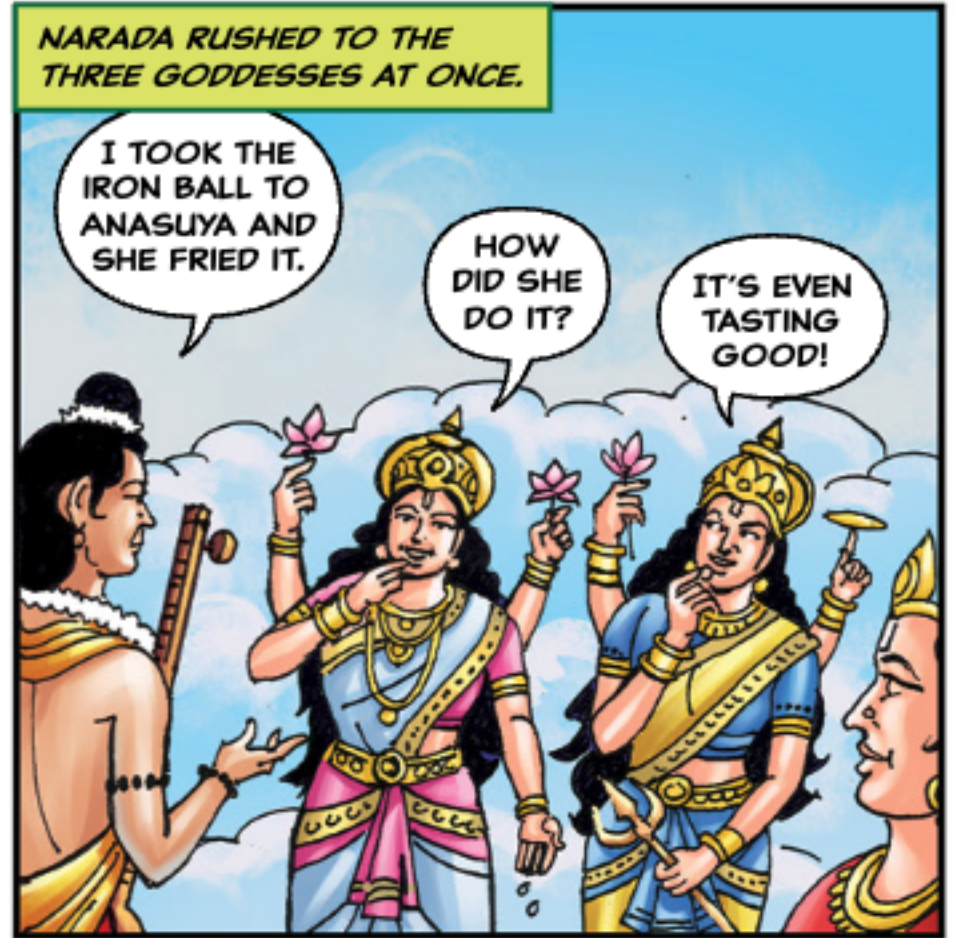


NARADA WENT WITH HIS REQUEST TO LAKSHMI AND PARVATI. THEY TOO LAUGHED AND SENT HIM AWAY.

NARADA THEN TOOK THE IRON GRAM TO ANASUYA WITH THE SAME REQUEST. SHE FRIED IT AND GAVE IT TO HIM.



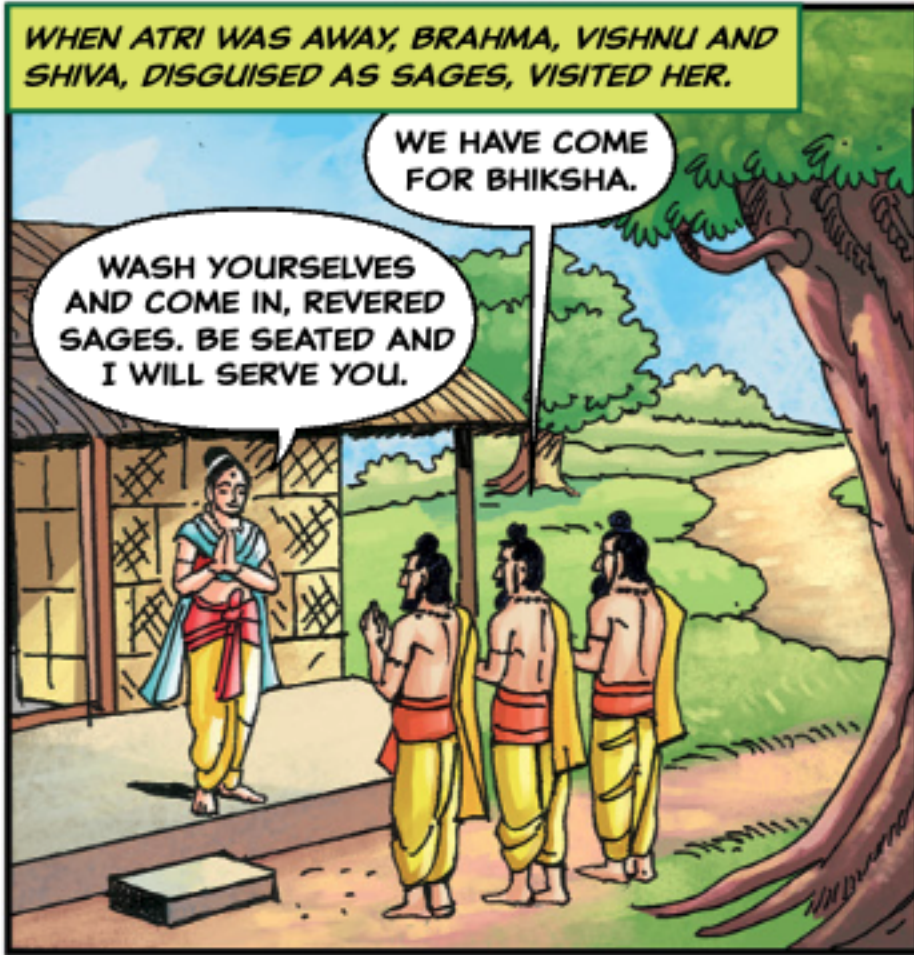
*PENANCE



*SO BE IT

*REMOVING CLOTHES BEFORE GIVING ALMS

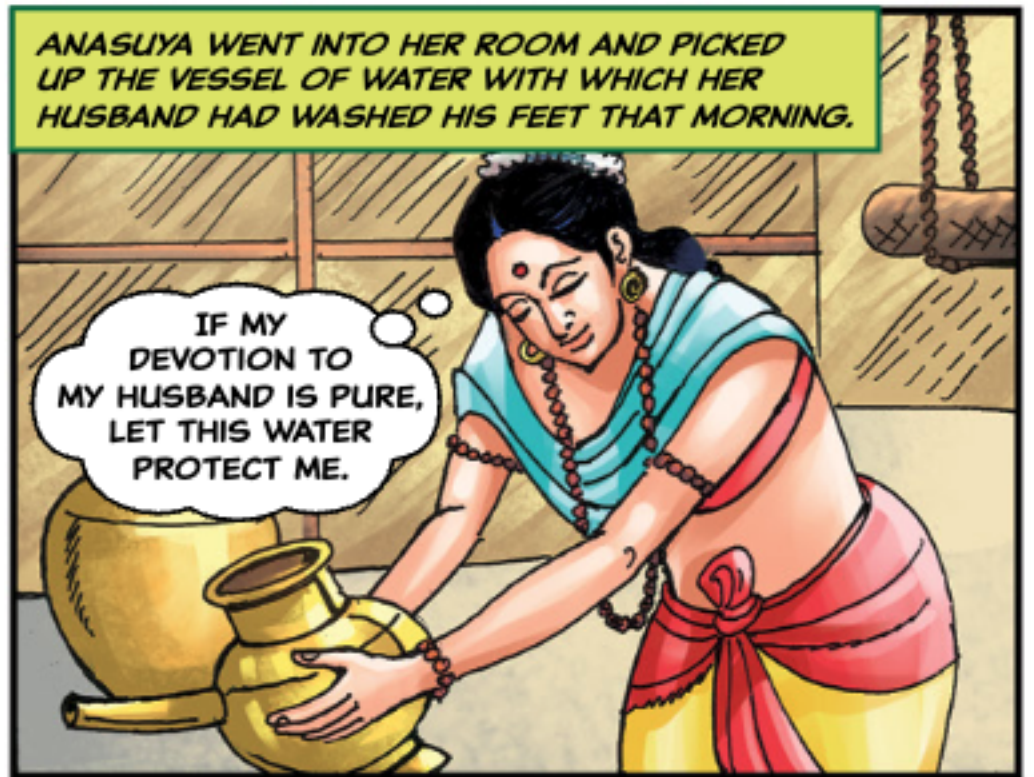
WHEN ATRI WAS AWAY, BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA, DISGUISED AS SAGES, VISITED HER.



ANASUYA WAS SPEECHLESS FOR A MOMENT. THEN —



ANASUYA WENT INTO HER ROOM AND PICKED UP THE VESSEL OF WATER WITH WHICH HER HUSBAND HAD WASHED HIS FEET THAT MORNING.



SHE WENT TO THE SAGES AND SPRINKLED THE WATER ON THEM.



IN A TRICE, THE THREE GODS WERE TURNED INTO INFANTS...

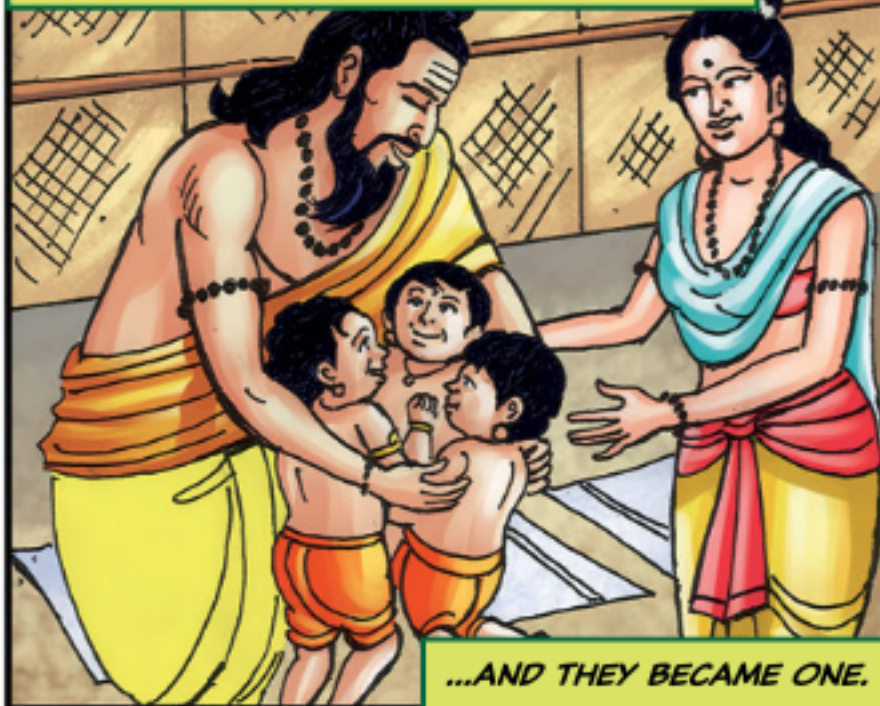
...TO WHOM ANASUYA GAVE FOOD AND...



...THEN SANG THEM TO SLEEP.

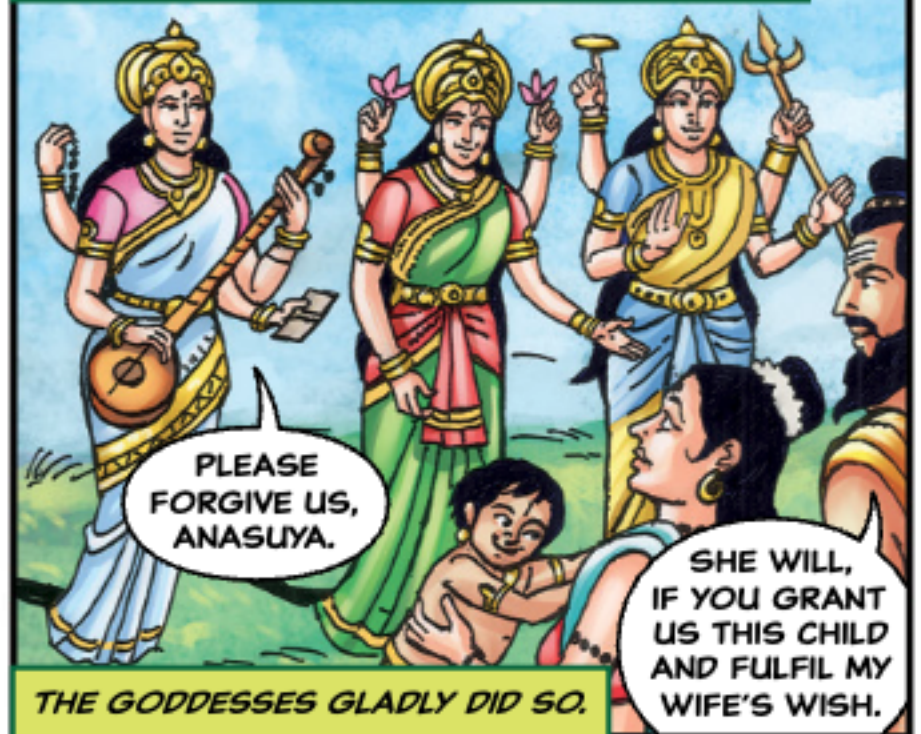


MEANWHILE, ATRI HAD SEEN WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT HOME THROUGH HIS DIVINE VISION. WHEN ANASUYA SHOWED HIM THE CHILDREN, HE HELD THEM CLOSE...



...AND THEY BECAME ONE.

THE GODDESSES, WHO HAD BEEN TOLD BY NARADA ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED, HASTENED TO ATRI AND ANASUYA'S ASHRAM.



PLEASE FORGIVE US, ANASUYA.

SHE WILL, IF YOU GRANT US THIS CHILD AND FULFIL MY WIFE'S WISH.

THE GODDESSES GLADLY DID SO.

THEN, THE TRIMURTI* APPEARED IN THEIR TRUE FORM AND BLESSED THE BABY.



THIS CHILD WILL BE A GREAT SAGE.

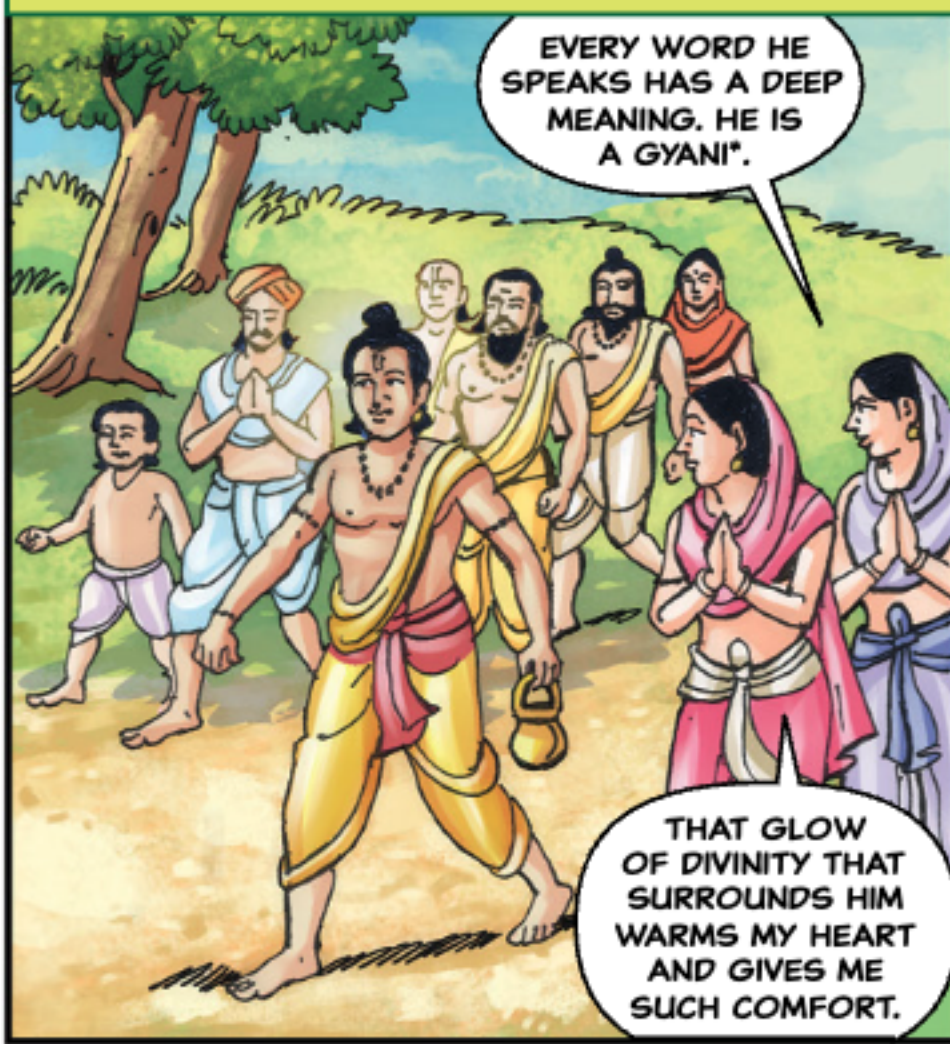
HE WILL BE EQUAL TO THE THREE OF US.

HE WILL BE CALLED DATTATREYA*.

*THE HOLY TRINITY

*DATTA IS 'TO GIVE'. ATREYA IS 'SON OF ATRI'

AS DATTATREYA GREW UP, HE WAS GREATLY REVERED.



DATTATREYA WANTED TO BE FREE OF THE CROWDS. HE WANTED TO BE ALONE. ONE DAY —



BUT DATTATREYA CONTINUED WALKING TILL HE WAS FULLY SUBMERGED.



AFTER STAYING UNDERWATER IN SAMADHI* FOR THREE DAYS, HE CAME OUT. BUT —



*SUPREMELY LEARNED

*HIGHEST STATE OF MENTAL CONCENTRATION

THE NEXT DAY, DATTATREYA DID THE SAME THING BUT THIS TIME WHEN HE CAME OUT —

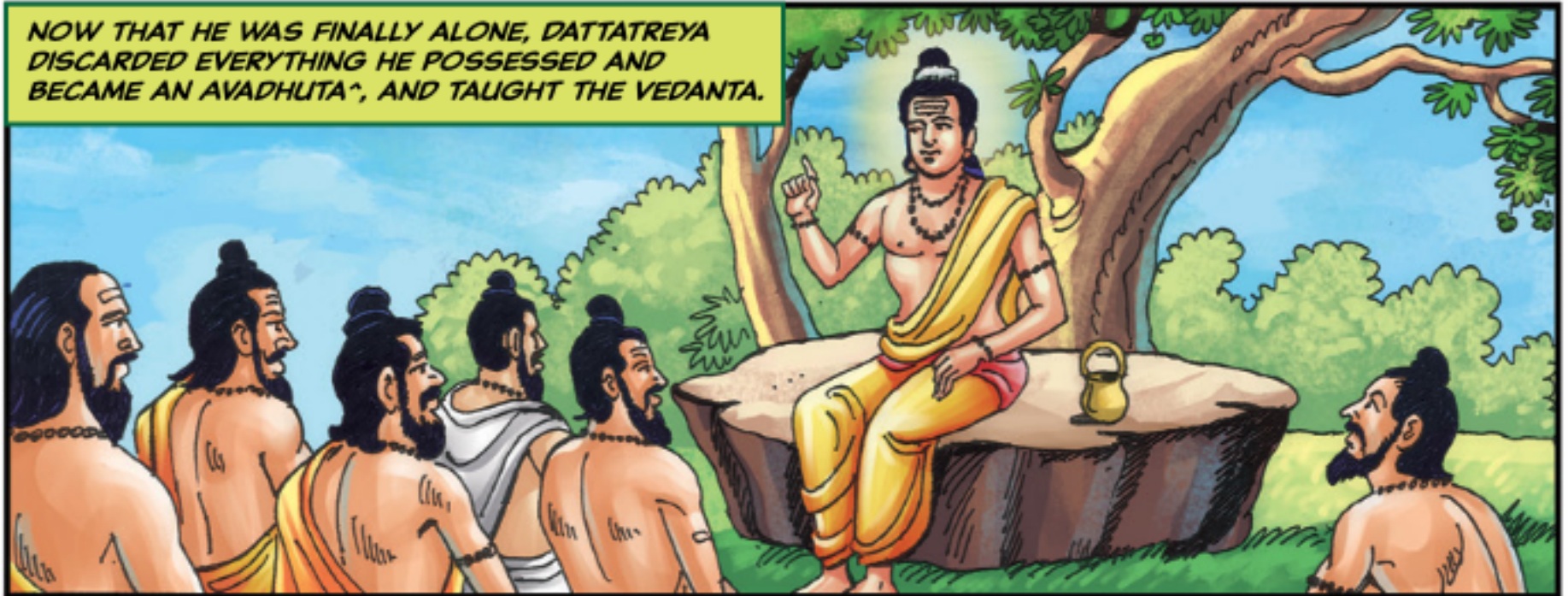
LOOK, HE HAS A WOMAN WITH HIM AND A CUP OF MADIRA* IN HIS HAND!

HE HAS FALLEN FROM HIS YOGIC STATE.

COME ON, LET US ALL LEAVE.

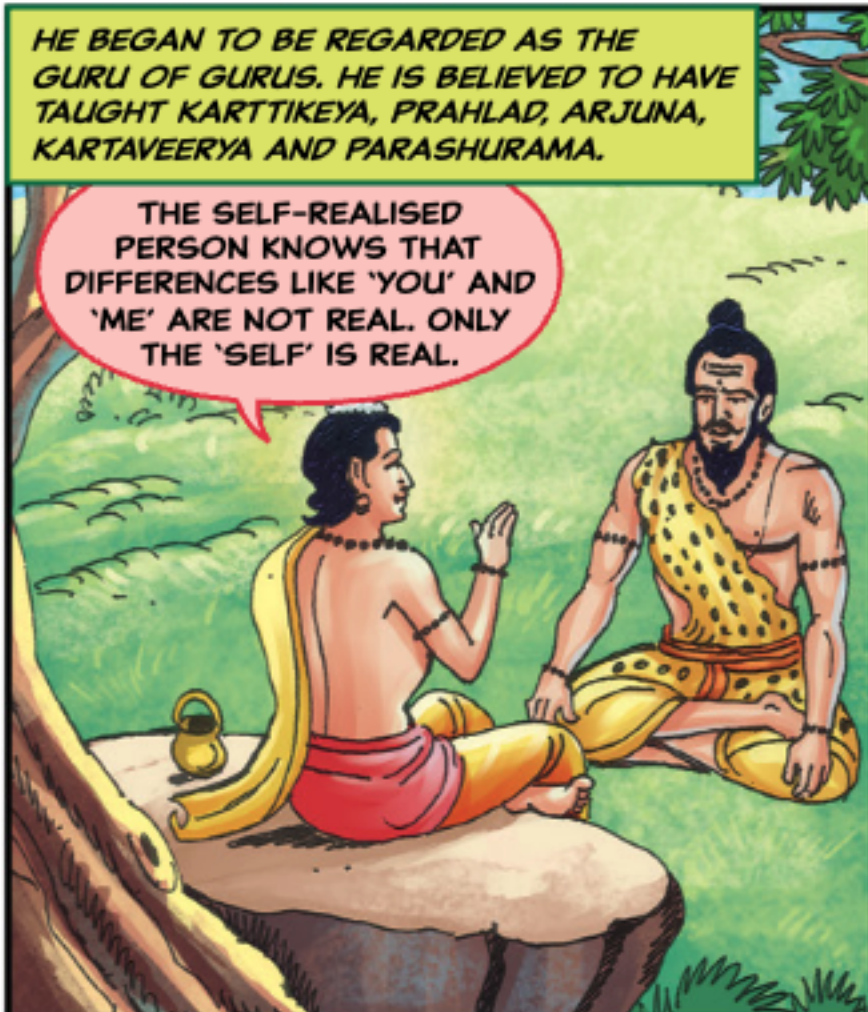
THE WOMAN HE HAD CREATED WAS A PART OF HIMSELF, ANAGHA.

NOW THAT HE WAS FINALLY ALONE, DATTATREYA DISCARDED EVERYTHING HE POSSESSED AND BECAME AN AVADHUTA*, AND TAUGHT THE VEDANTA.



HE BEGAN TO BE REGARDED AS THE GURU OF GURUS. HE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE TAUGHT KARTTIKEYA, PRAHLAD, ARJUNA, KARTAVEERYA AND PARASHURAMA.

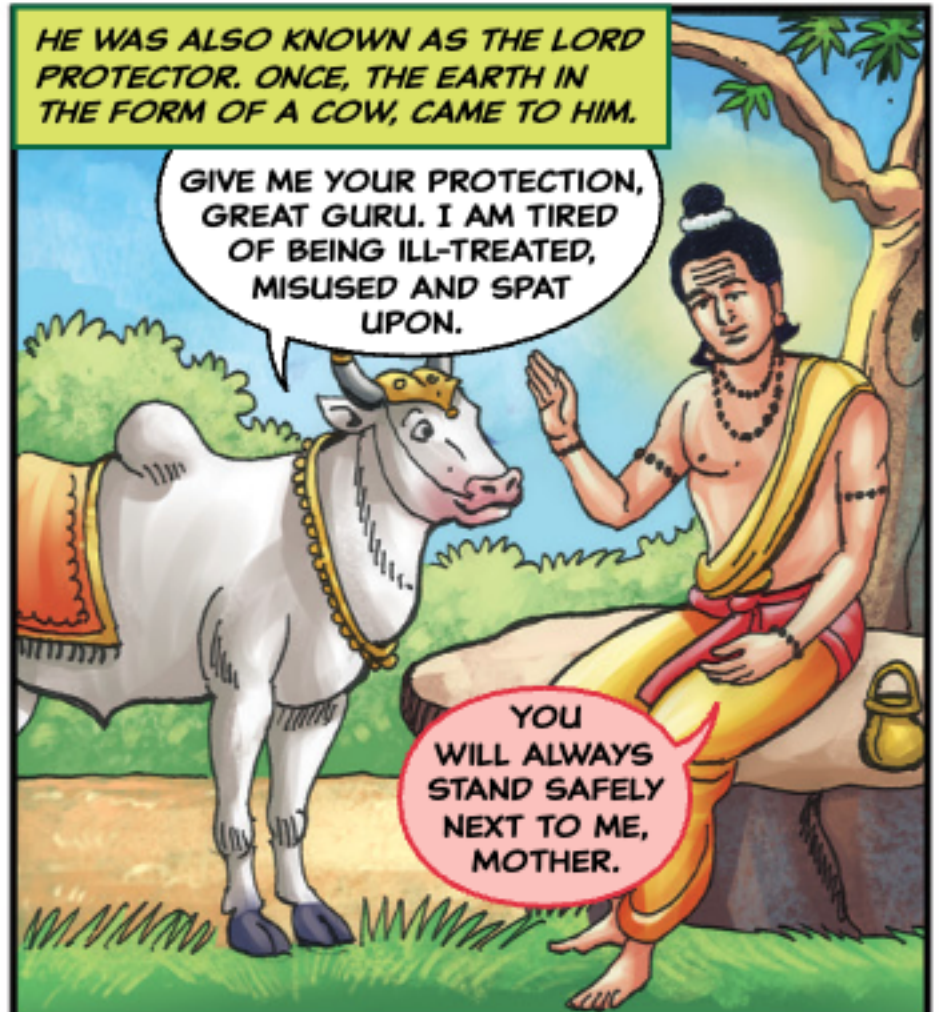
THE SELF-REALISED PERSON KNOWS THAT DIFFERENCES LIKE 'YOU' AND 'ME' ARE NOT REAL. ONLY THE 'SELF' IS REAL.



HE WAS ALSO KNOWN AS THE LORD PROTECTOR. ONCE, THE EARTH IN THE FORM OF A COW, CAME TO HIM.

GIVE ME YOUR PROTECTION, GREAT GURU. I AM TIRED OF BEING ILL-TREATED, MISUSED AND SPAT UPON.

YOU WILL ALWAYS STAND SAFELY NEXT TO ME, MOTHER.



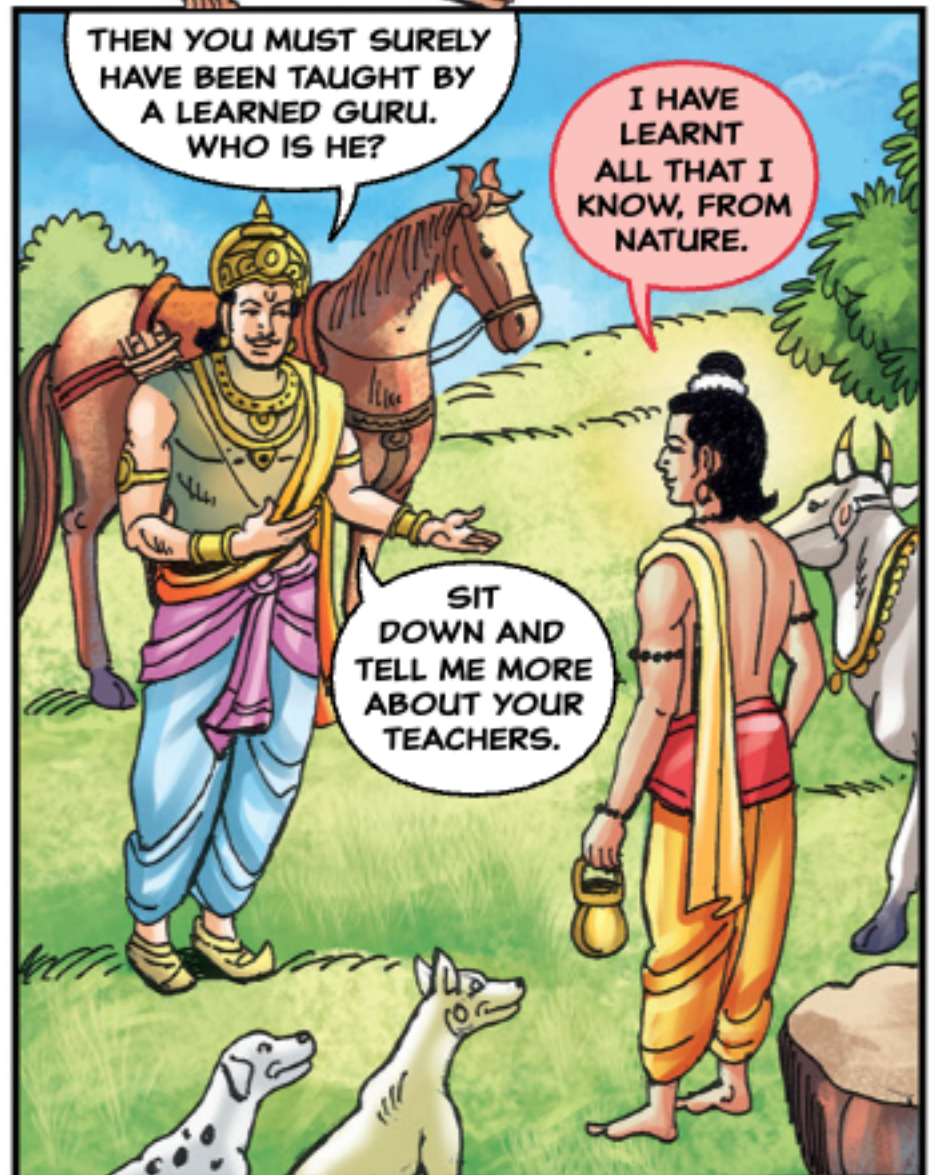
*WINE

*A PERSON WHO HAS REALISED THE TRUE NATURE OF REALITY AND IS BEYOND WORLDLY CONCERNS

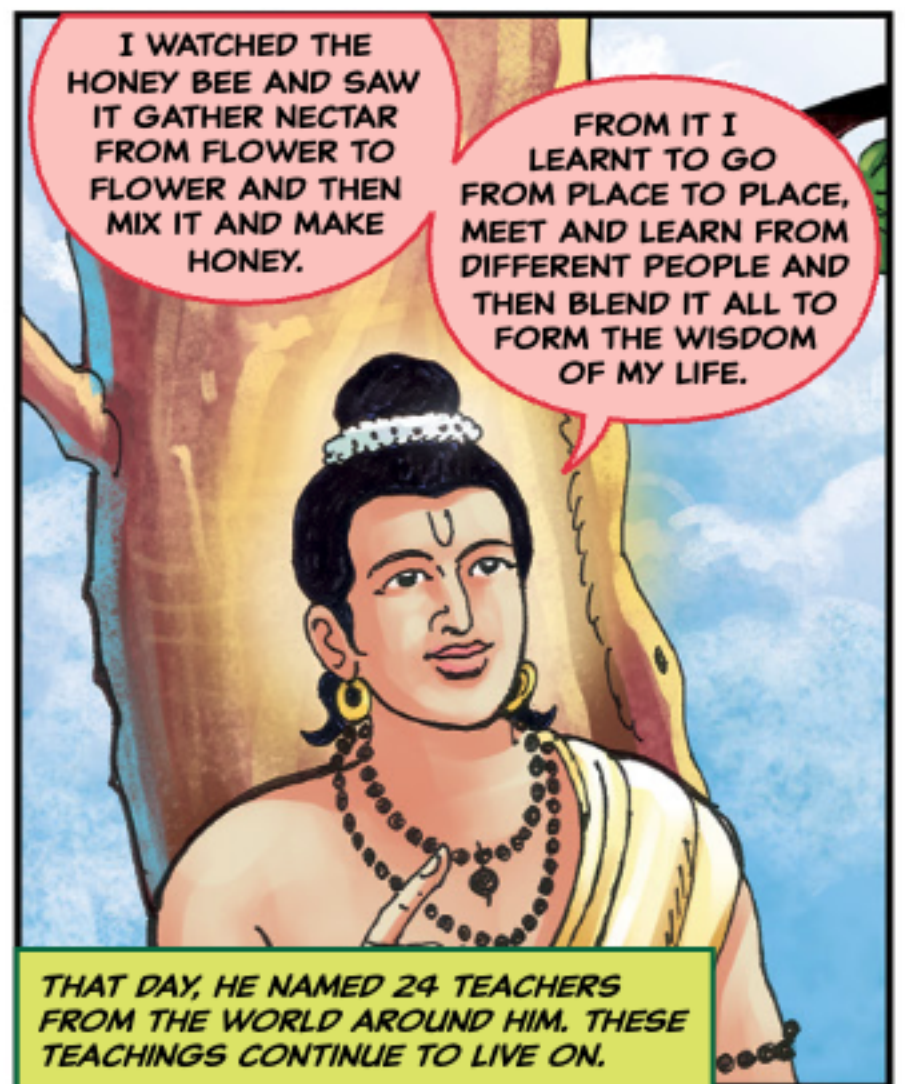
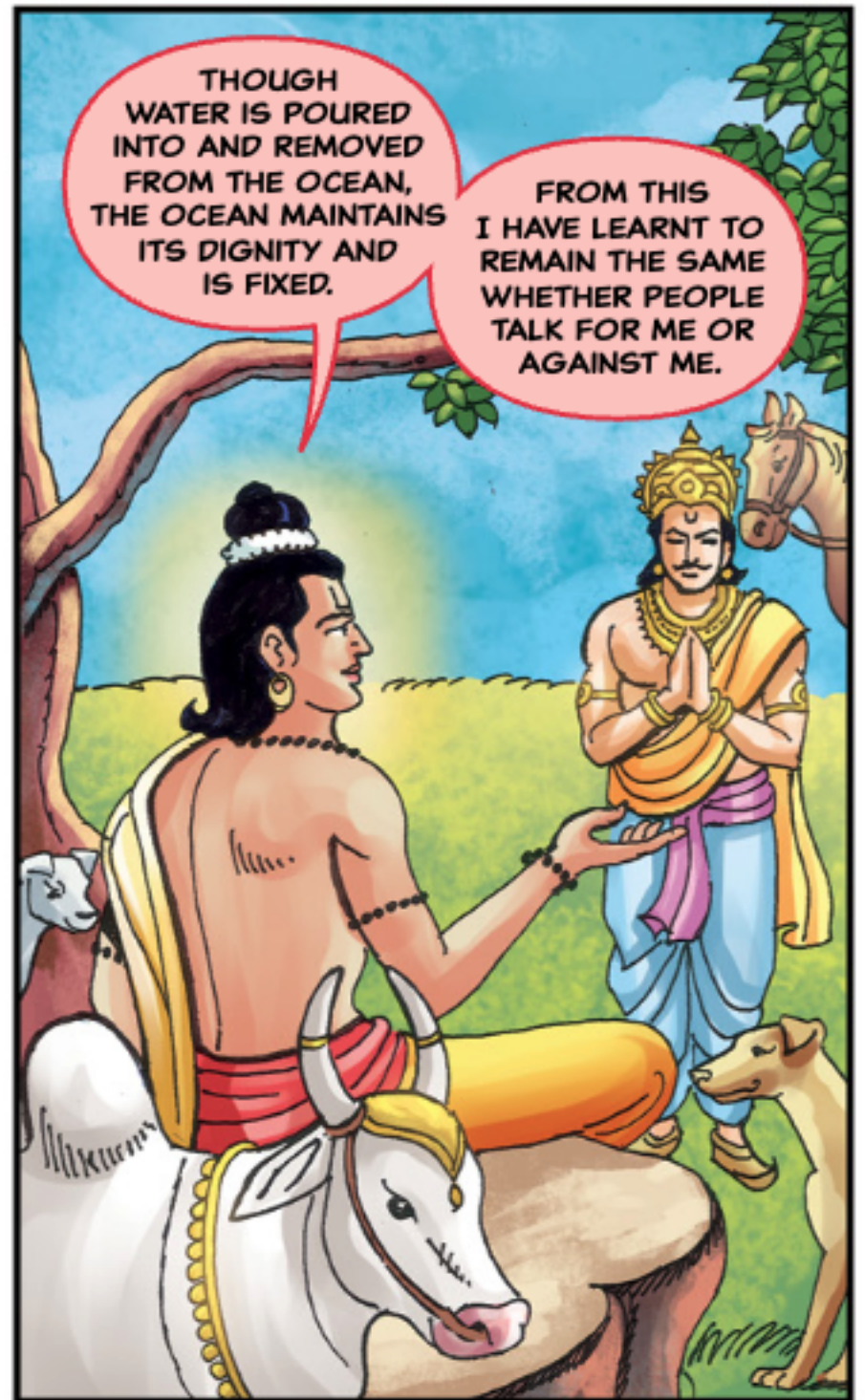
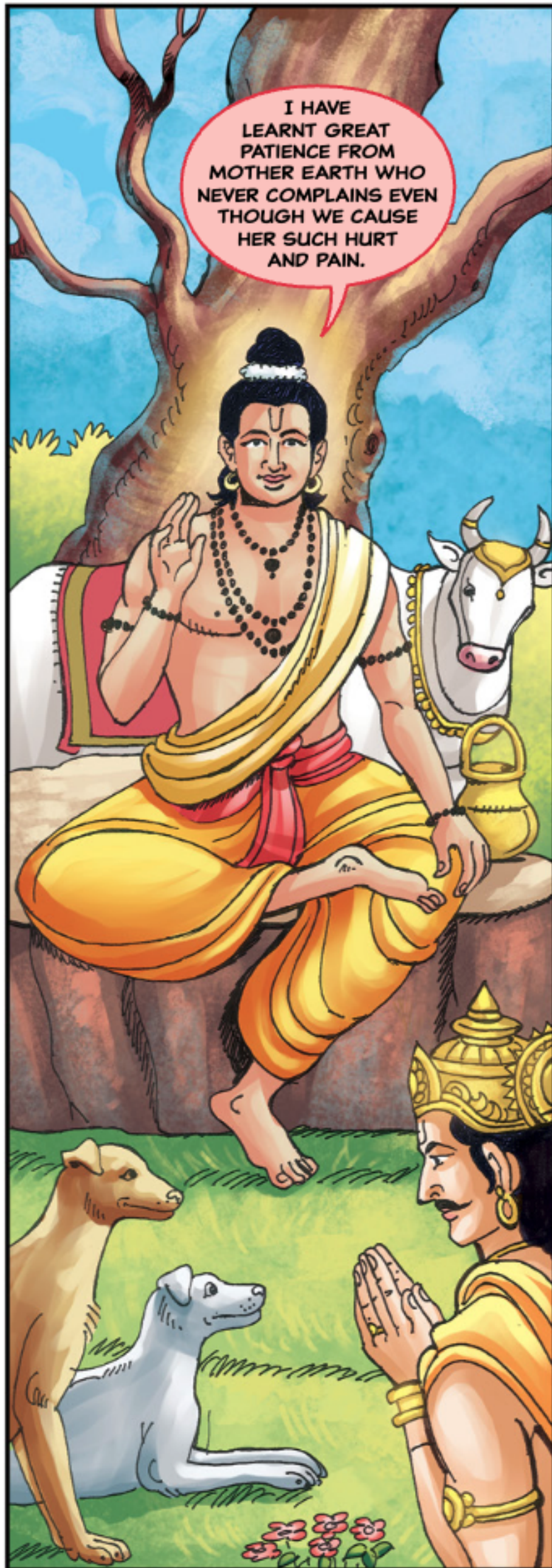
ANOTHER TIME, THE FOUR VEDAS APPEARED BEFORE HIM, TAKING THE FORM OF DOGS.



ONCE, WHEN A KING NAMED YADU WAS OUT RIDING —



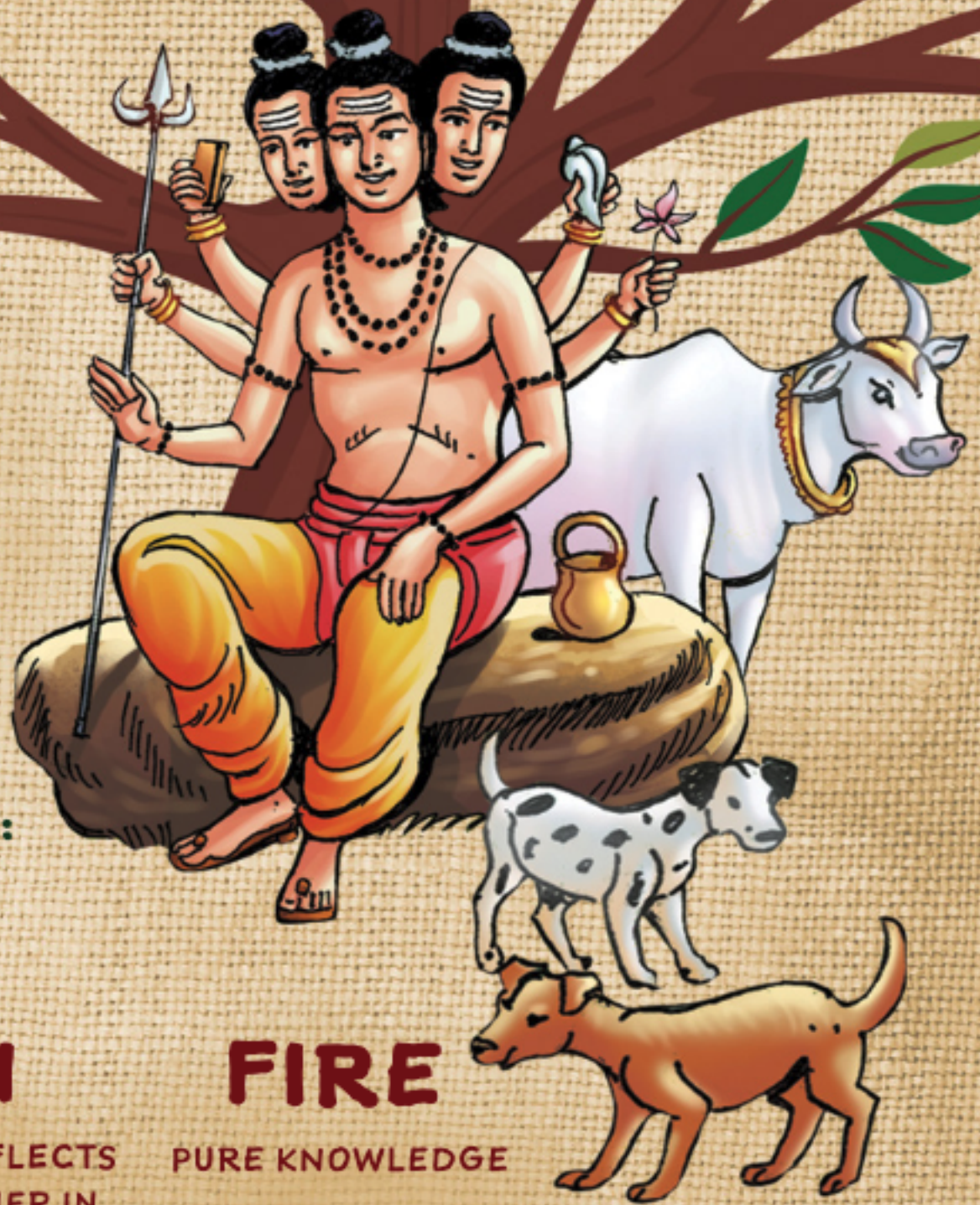
*ONE WHO ASKS FOR ALMS FOR A LIVING, A MONK



THAT DAY, HE NAMED 24 TEACHERS FROM THE WORLD AROUND HIM. THESE TEACHINGS CONTINUE TO LIVE ON.

THE 24 TEACHERS

COMPLETELY FREE OF INTOLERANCE AND BIAS, DATTATREYA RECEIVED WISDOM FROM EVERYTHING AROUND HIM. THE 24 TEACHERS HE NAMED OTHER THAN THE EARTH, WATER, SKY, OCEAN AND THE BEE ARE:



AIR

DETACHMENT

SUN

THE SOUL REFLECTS
THE CONTAINER IN
WHICH IT STAYS

FIRE

PURE KNOWLEDGE

PYTHON

CONTENTMENT

DEER

THE PITFALLS OF
SUCCUMBING TO
THE SENSES

MOTH

CONTROL OF SIGHT



MOON

THE SOUL IS
COMPLETE IN
ITSELF

FISH

THE DANGER
OF GLUTTONY

BEETLE

AS A MAN THINKS,
SO HE BECOMES

PIGEON

ATTACHMENT
CAUSES BONDAGE

DANCING GIRL

ABANDONING DESIRE GIVES PEACE

CHILD

CHEERFULNESS

SERPENT

A CAVE OR A TEMPLE IS
ENOUGH FOR AN ASCETIC
TO REST

ARROW MAKER

INTENSE CONCENTRATION OF MIND

RAVEN

ABANDONING
PLEASURES
GIVES JOY

ELEPHANT

THE PITFALLS OF LUST

BLACK BEE

TO NOT BE A BURDEN TO
ANY HOUSEHOLD

YOUNG GIRL

SOLITUDE FOR THE ASCETIC

SPIDER

TO GET
ENTANGLED IN A WEB
OF THOUGHTS AND IDEAS
IS DANGEROUS

THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN KING YADU
AND DATTATREYA IS PARTLY RECORDED IN
THE BHAGAVATA AS THE AVADHUTA GITA
OR THE SONG OF THE FREE SOUL.



Script: Reena I. Puri
Design: S.G. Abhirami

PRITHVI

LIKE MOST CULTURES, INDIANS ALSO WORSHIP THE EARTH, PERSONIFIED IN THE FORM OF A GODDESS.



KNOWN AS PRITHVI IN THE VEDAS AND BHOOMI IN THE PURANAS, THIS GODDESS REPRESENTS LIFE-GIVING QUALITIES LIKE FERTILITY, GROWTH AND NURTURING.

PRITHVI IS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH THE VARAHA AVATAR OF VISHNU.

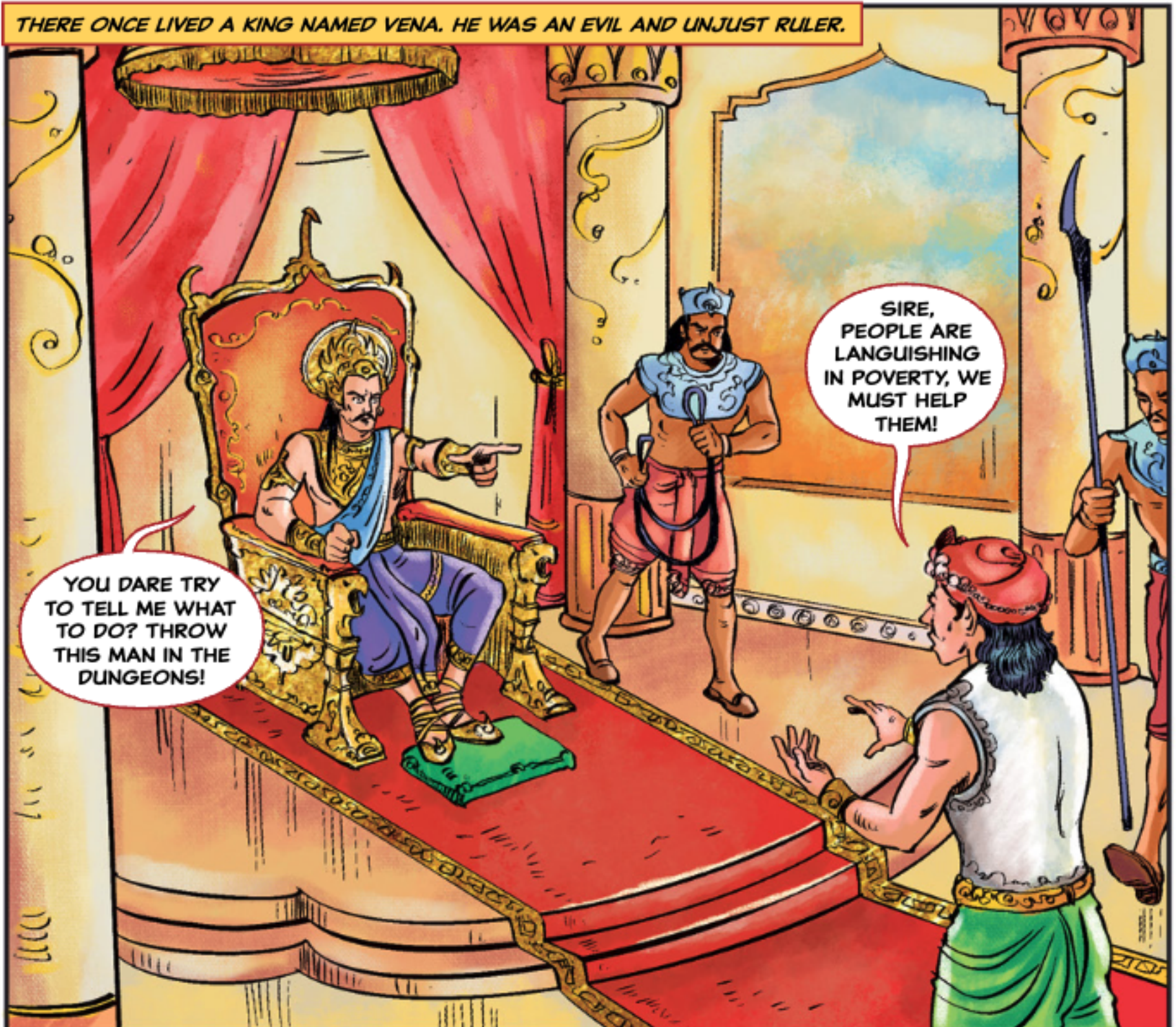


HOWEVER, IN THE VEDAS, SHE IS SAID TO BE THE CONSORT OF DYAUS – THE SKY GOD.

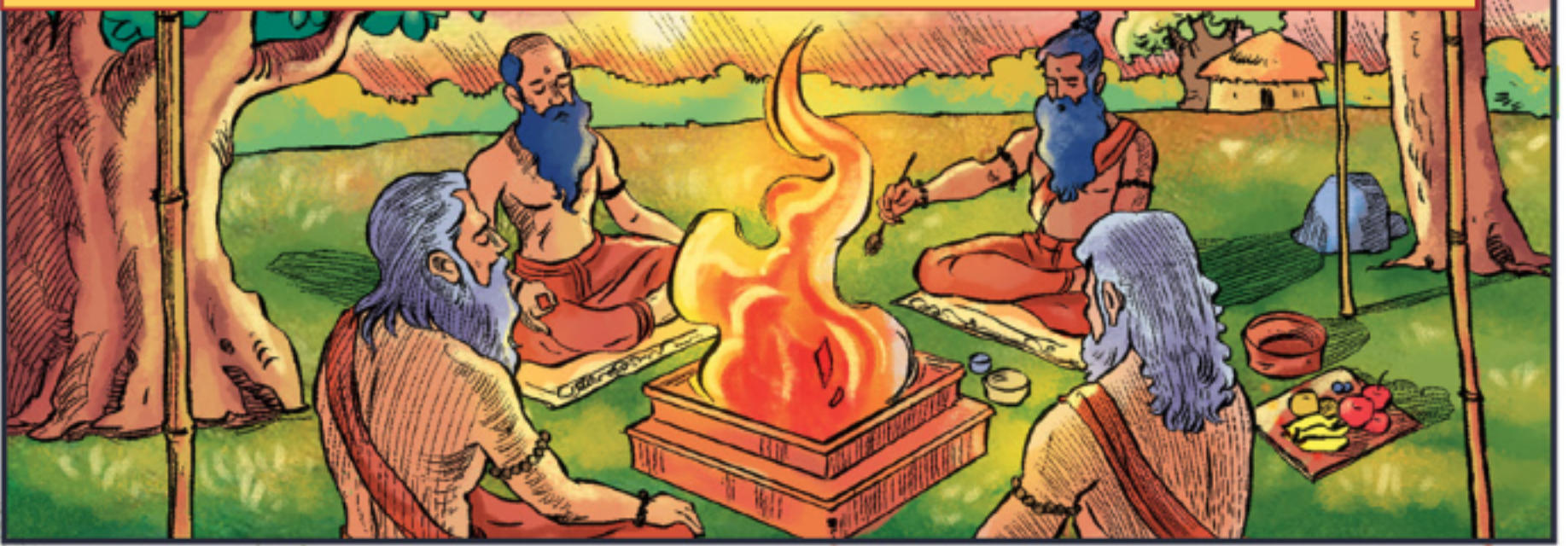


HERE IS A LITTLE-KNOWN STORY FROM THE VISHNU PURANA, WHICH EXPLAINS HOW PRITHVI GOT HER NAME.

THERE ONCE LIVED A KING NAMED VENA. HE WAS AN EVIL AND UNJUST RULER.



SOON, SOME POWERFUL RISHIS OF THE LAND CAME TOGETHER TO PUT AN END TO VENA'S TYRANNY.



UNABLE TO FIGHT THEIR COMBINED POWERS, VENA FELL AND WAS KILLED.



EVERYONE WAS OVERJOYED.



HOWEVER, WITHOUT A RULER, THE KINGDOM FELL INTO ANARCHY.

WITH NO ONE TO KEEP THEM IN LINE, CRIMINALS AND THIEVES HAVE TAKEN OVER.

WE MUST FIND A NEW KING FOR THE LAND.

IT WAS DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST IF THE NEW RULER WAS BORN FROM THE OLD RULER, VENA, THROUGH A RITUAL.

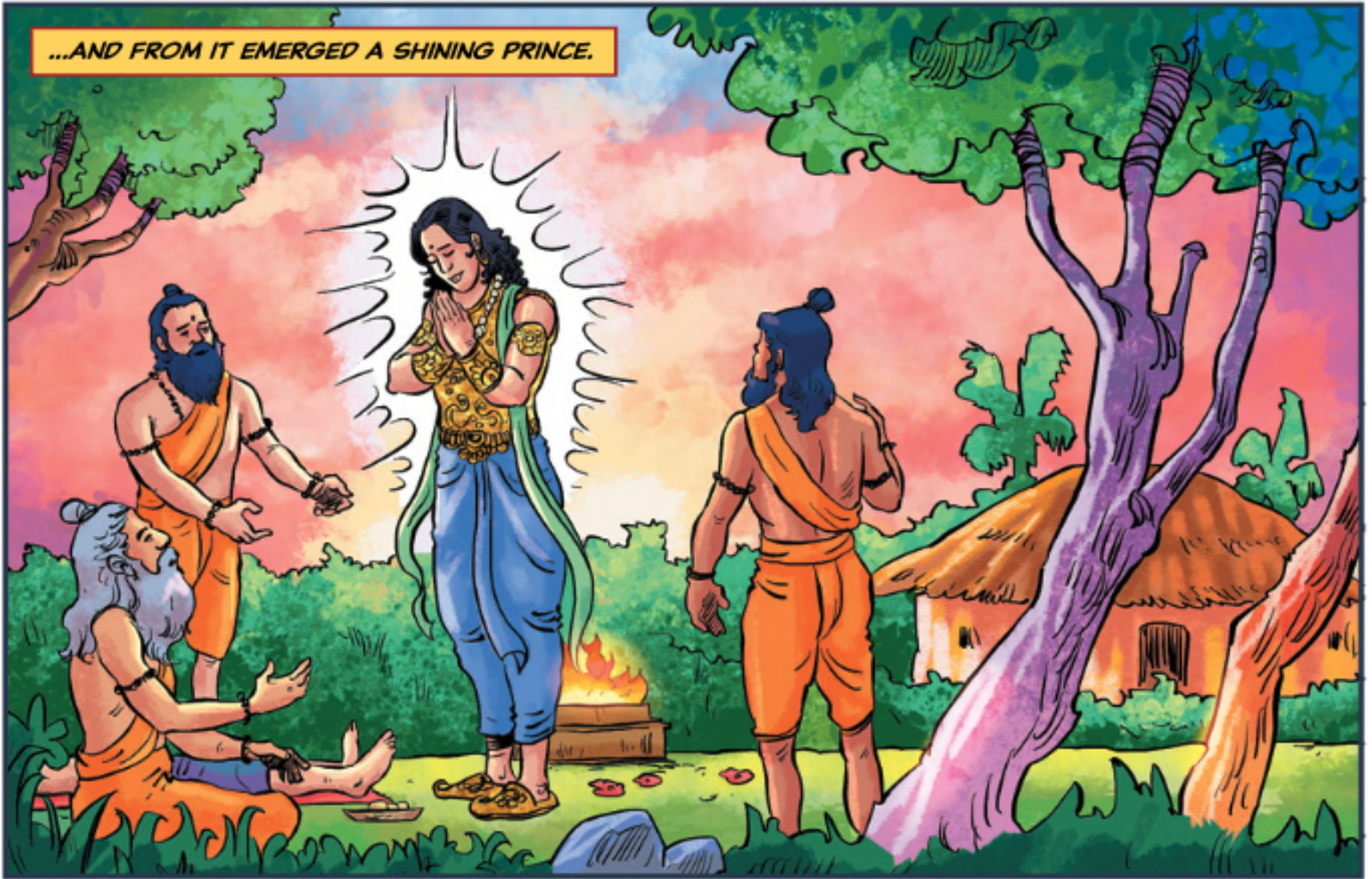
FOR THIS, THE RISHIS FIRST RUBBED THE THIGH OF VENA'S CORPSE. FROM THAT, EMERGED A STRANGE CREATURE.

IT WAS BORN OF ALL THE SIN AND EVIL IN VENA'S BODY.

WE HAVE RID THE BODY OF EVIL. NOW, IT CAN BRING FORTH A TRUE AND GOOD RULER.

THE RISHIS THEN RUBBED THE RIGHT ARM OF VENA'S BODY...

...AND FROM IT EMERGED A SHINING PRINCE.



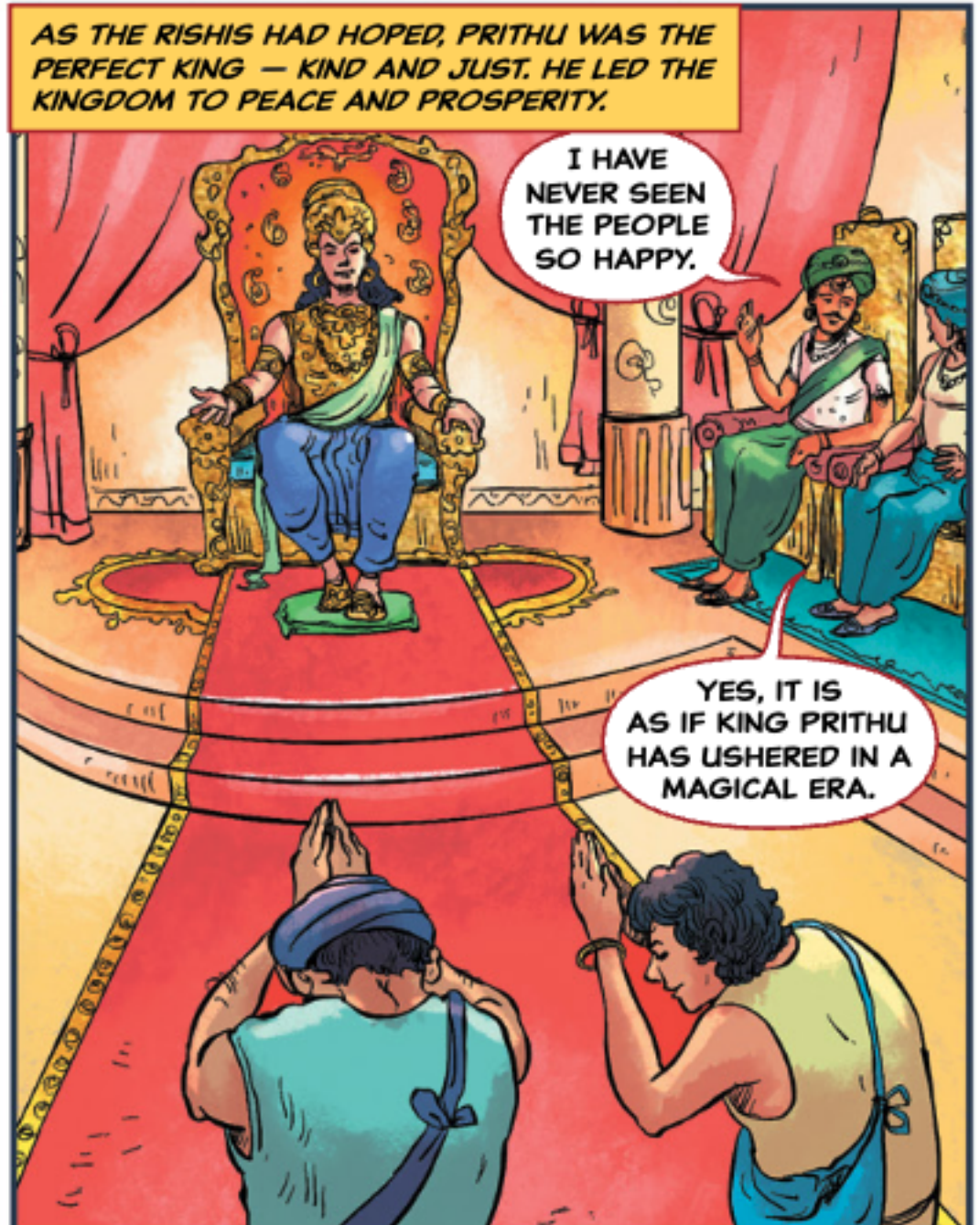
YOU ARE PRITHU, BORN FROM VENA TO RULE THE LAND AND BRING PEACE AND JUSTICE.



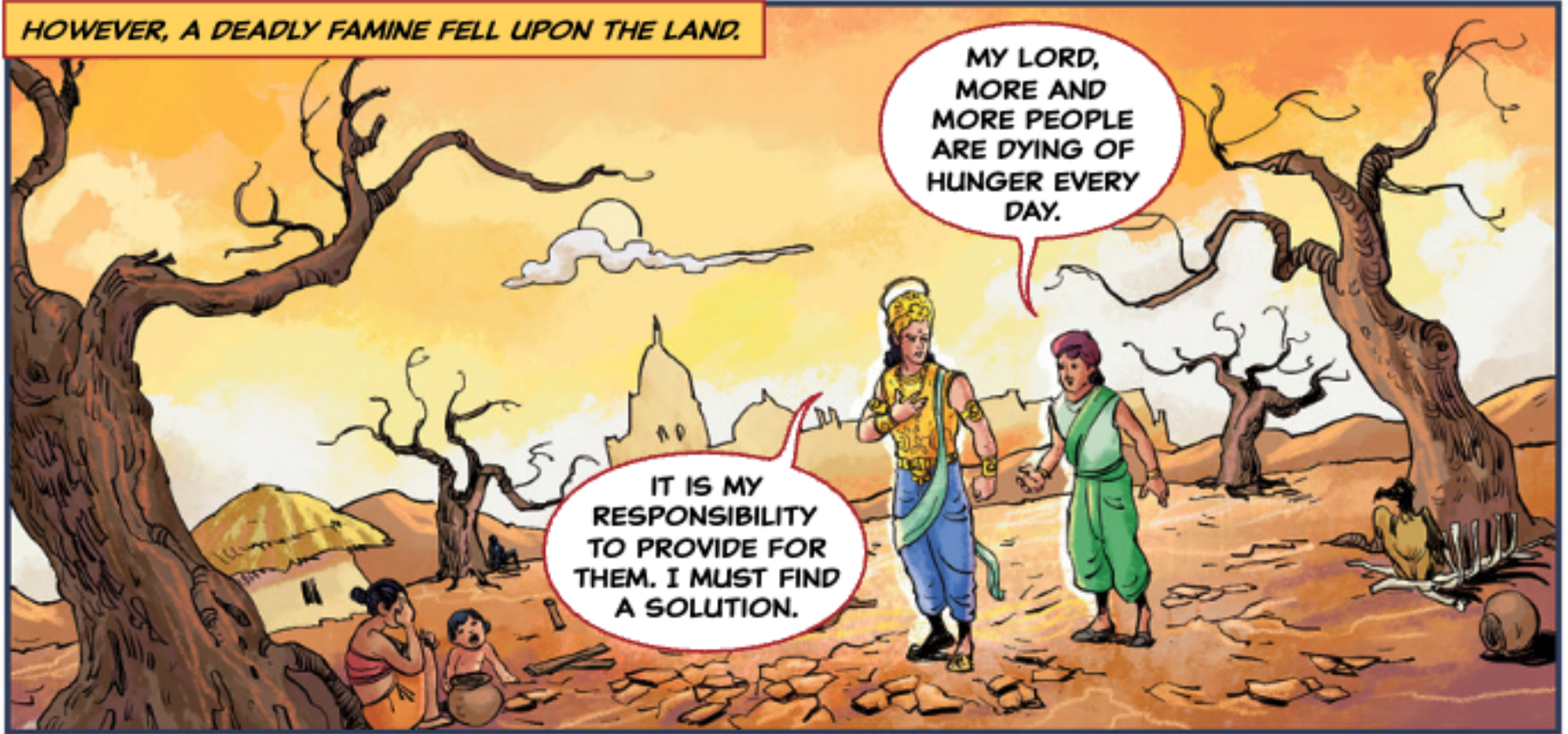
AS THE RISHIS HAD HOPED, PRITHU WAS THE PERFECT KING — KIND AND JUST. HE LED THE KINGDOM TO PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

I HAVE NEVER SEEN THE PEOPLE SO HAPPY.

YES, IT IS AS IF KING PRITHU HAS USHERED IN A MAGICAL ERA.



HOWEVER, A DEADLY FAMINE FELL UPON THE LAND.



PRITHU CONSULTED WITH ALL THE WISE MEN IN THE LAND BUT COULD NOT FIND A WAY TO END THE FAMINE.

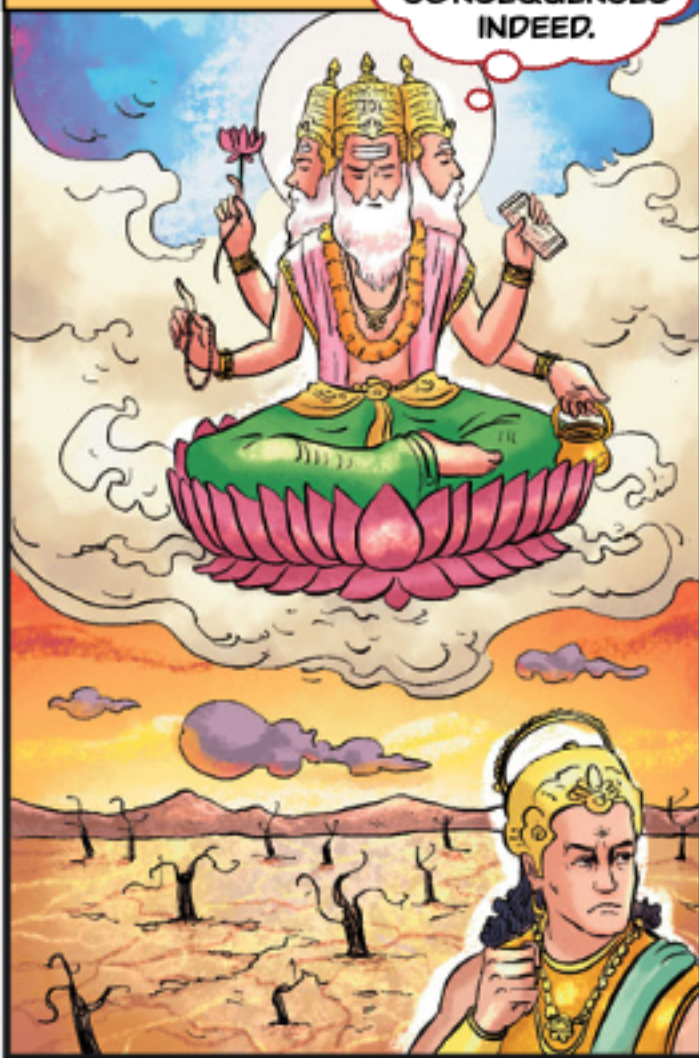


PRITHU WAS NOT READY TO LET HIS SUBJECTS DOWN. AFTER THINKING LONG AND HARD, HE CAME UP WITH A PLAN.

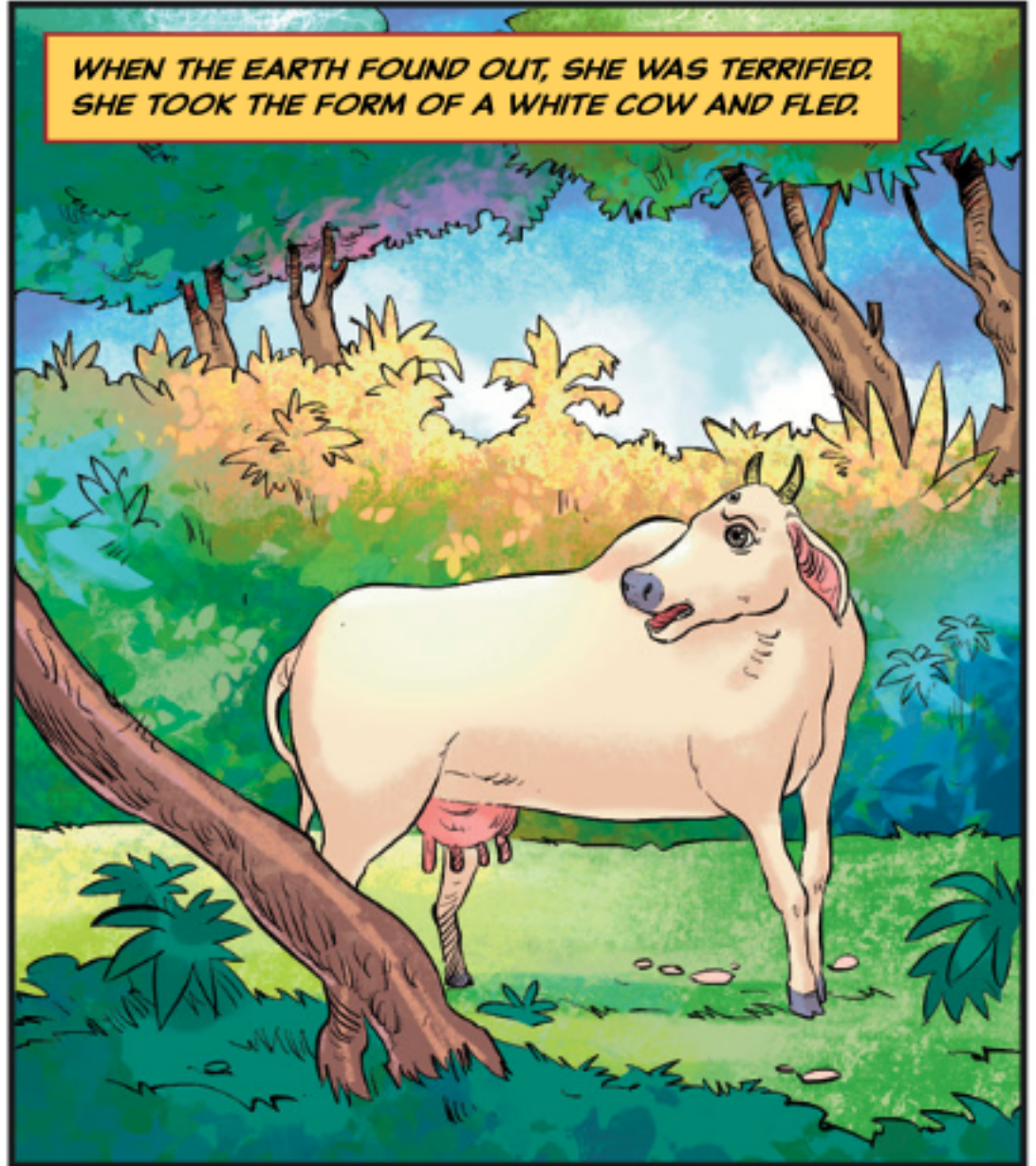


THE NEWS OF PRITHU'S
DECISION SPREAD FAR
AND WIDE, ALL THE
WAY TO THE GODS.

THIS WILL
HAVE GRAVE
CONSEQUENCES
INDEED.

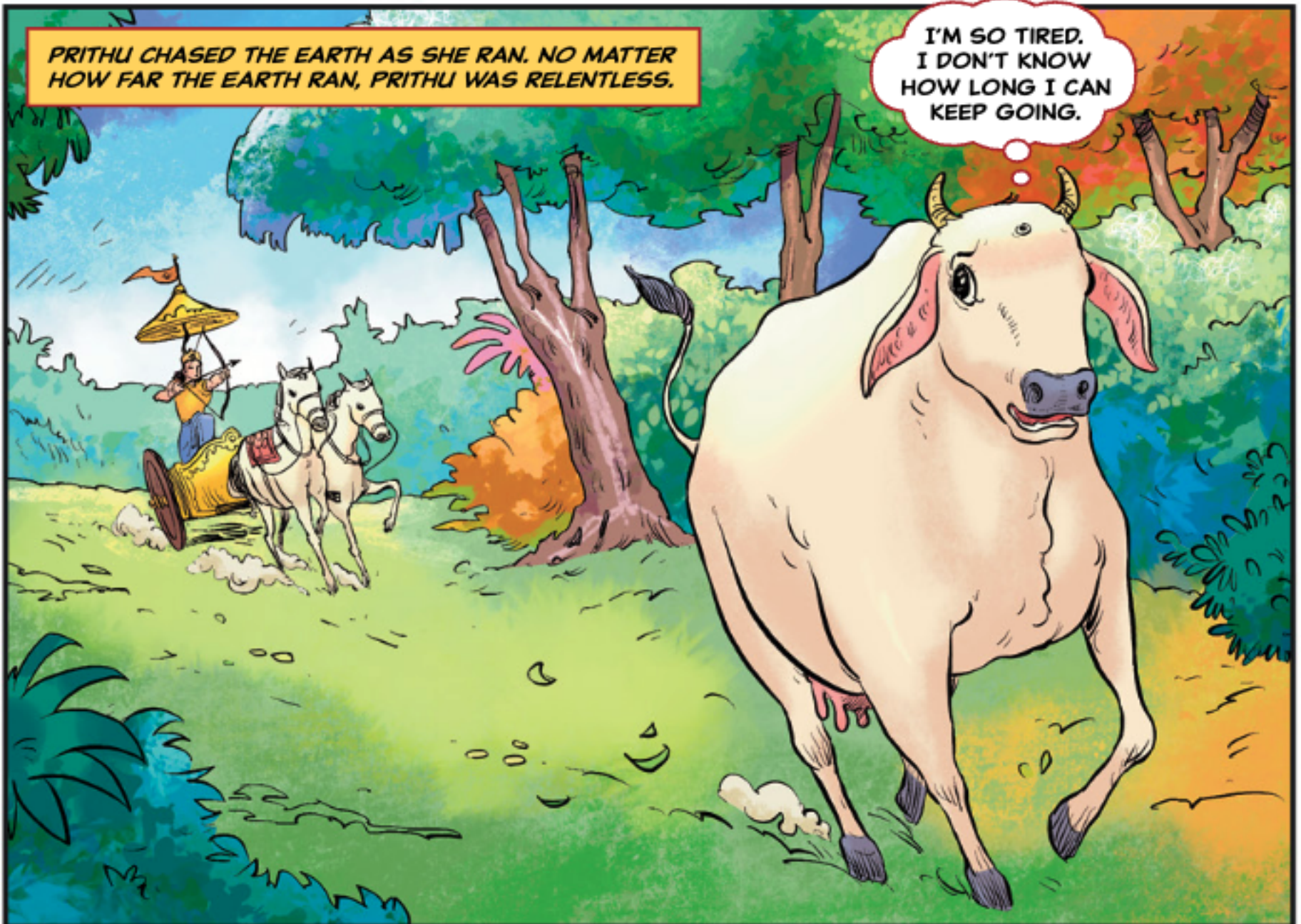


WHEN THE EARTH FOUND OUT, SHE WAS TERRIFIED.
SHE TOOK THE FORM OF A WHITE COW AND FLED.

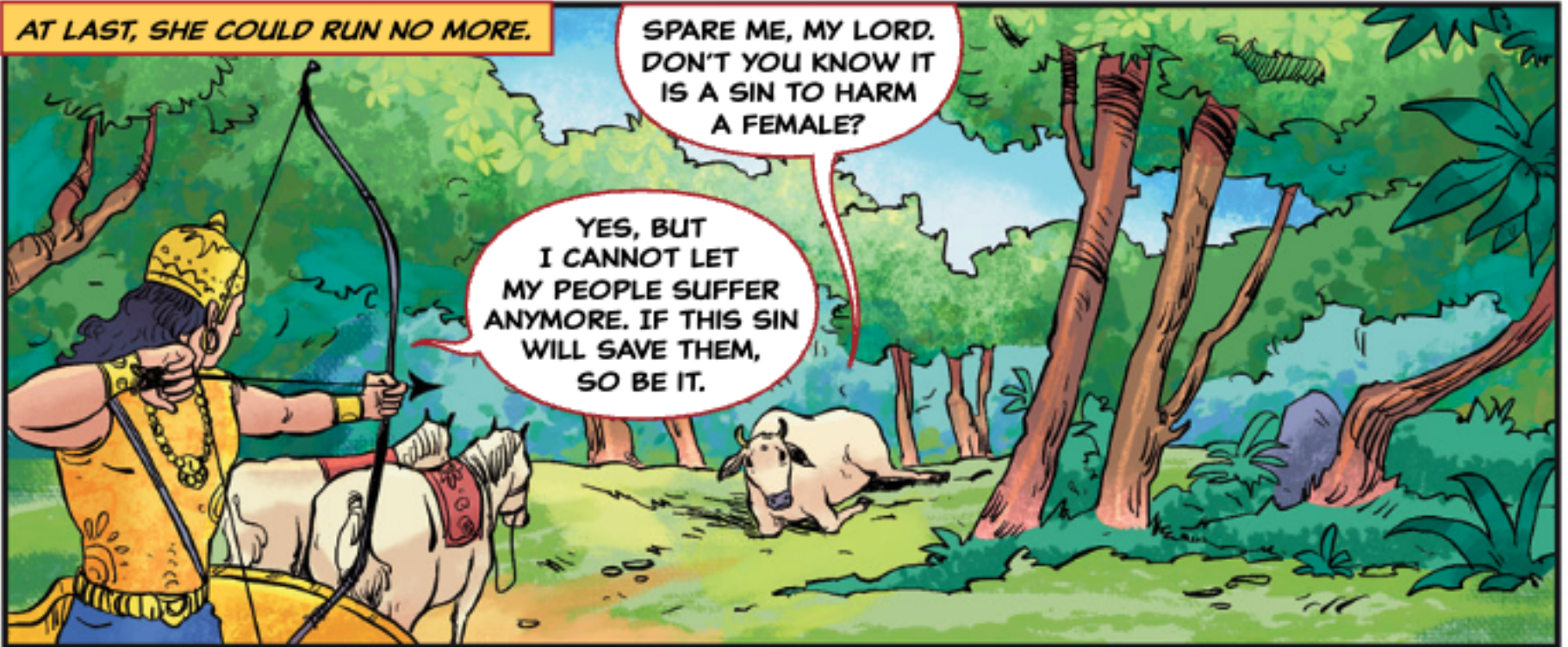


PRITHU CHASED THE EARTH AS SHE RAN. NO MATTER
HOW FAR THE EARTH RAN, PRITHU WAS RELENTLESS.

I'M SO TIRED.
I DON'T KNOW
HOW LONG I CAN
KEEP GOING.



AT LAST, SHE COULD RUN NO MORE.

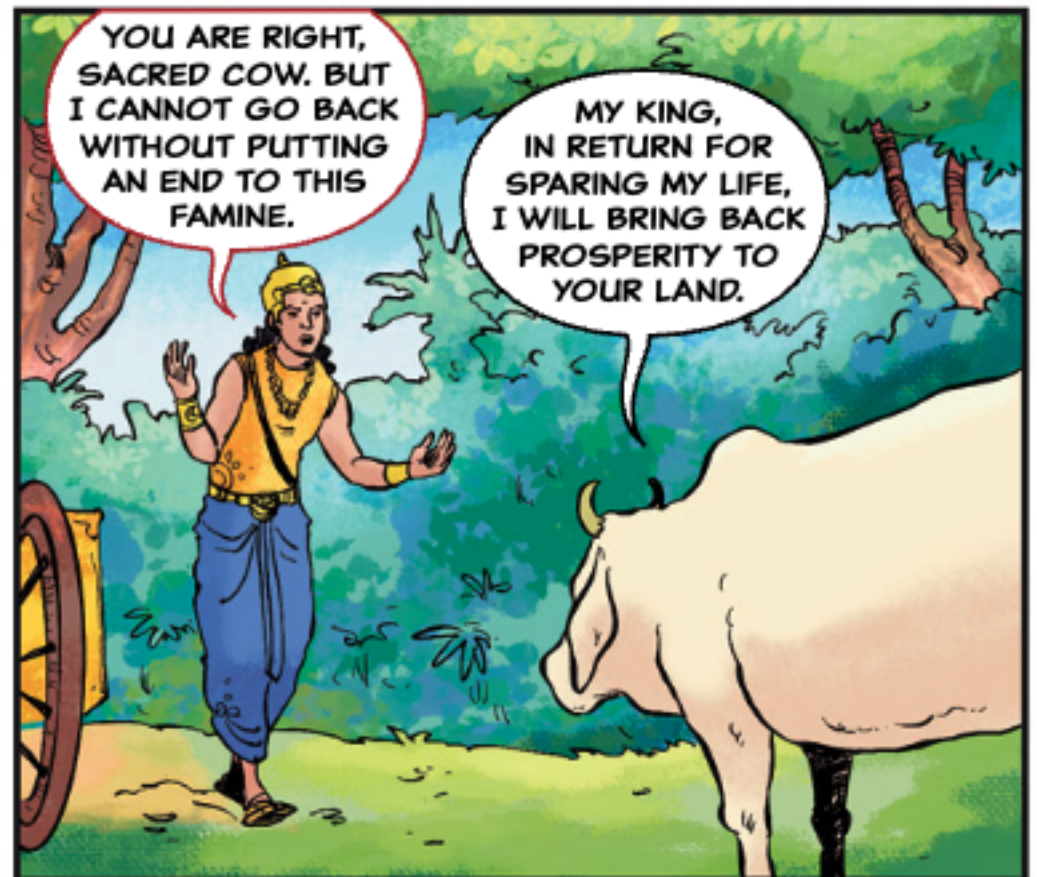


SPARE ME, MY LORD. DON'T YOU KNOW IT IS A SIN TO HARM A FEMALE?

YES, BUT I CANNOT LET MY PEOPLE SUFFER ANYMORE. IF THIS SIN WILL SAVE THEM, SO BE IT.



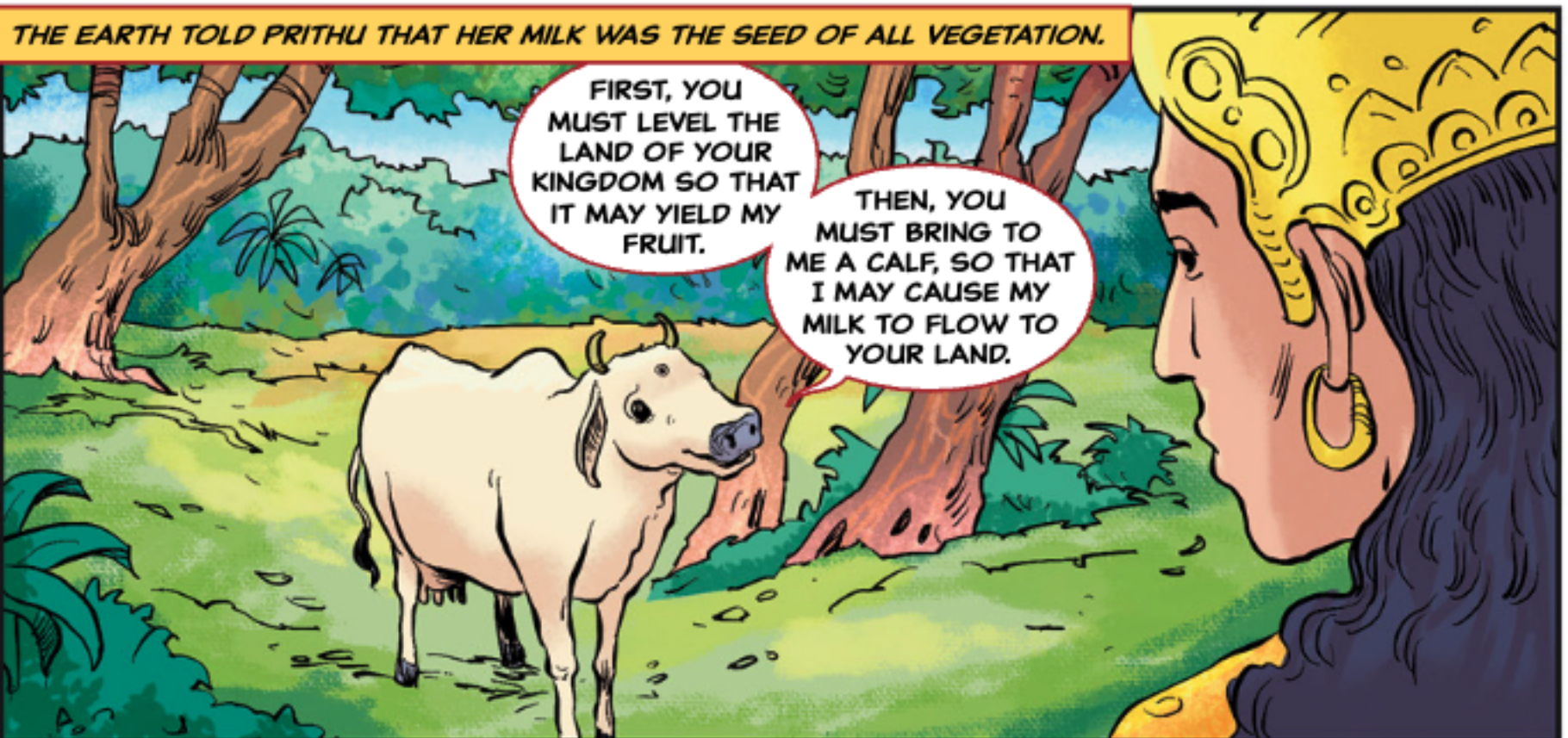
YOU SAY YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR PEOPLE. HOW WILL THEY SURVIVE WITHOUT ME, THEIR MOTHER?



YOU ARE RIGHT, SACRED COW. BUT I CANNOT GO BACK WITHOUT PUTTING AN END TO THIS FAMINE.

MY KING, IN RETURN FOR SPARING MY LIFE, I WILL BRING BACK PROSPERITY TO YOUR LAND.

THE EARTH TOLD PRITHU THAT HER MILK WAS THE SEED OF ALL VEGETATION.



FIRST, YOU MUST LEVEL THE LAND OF YOUR KINGDOM SO THAT IT MAY YIELD MY FRUIT.

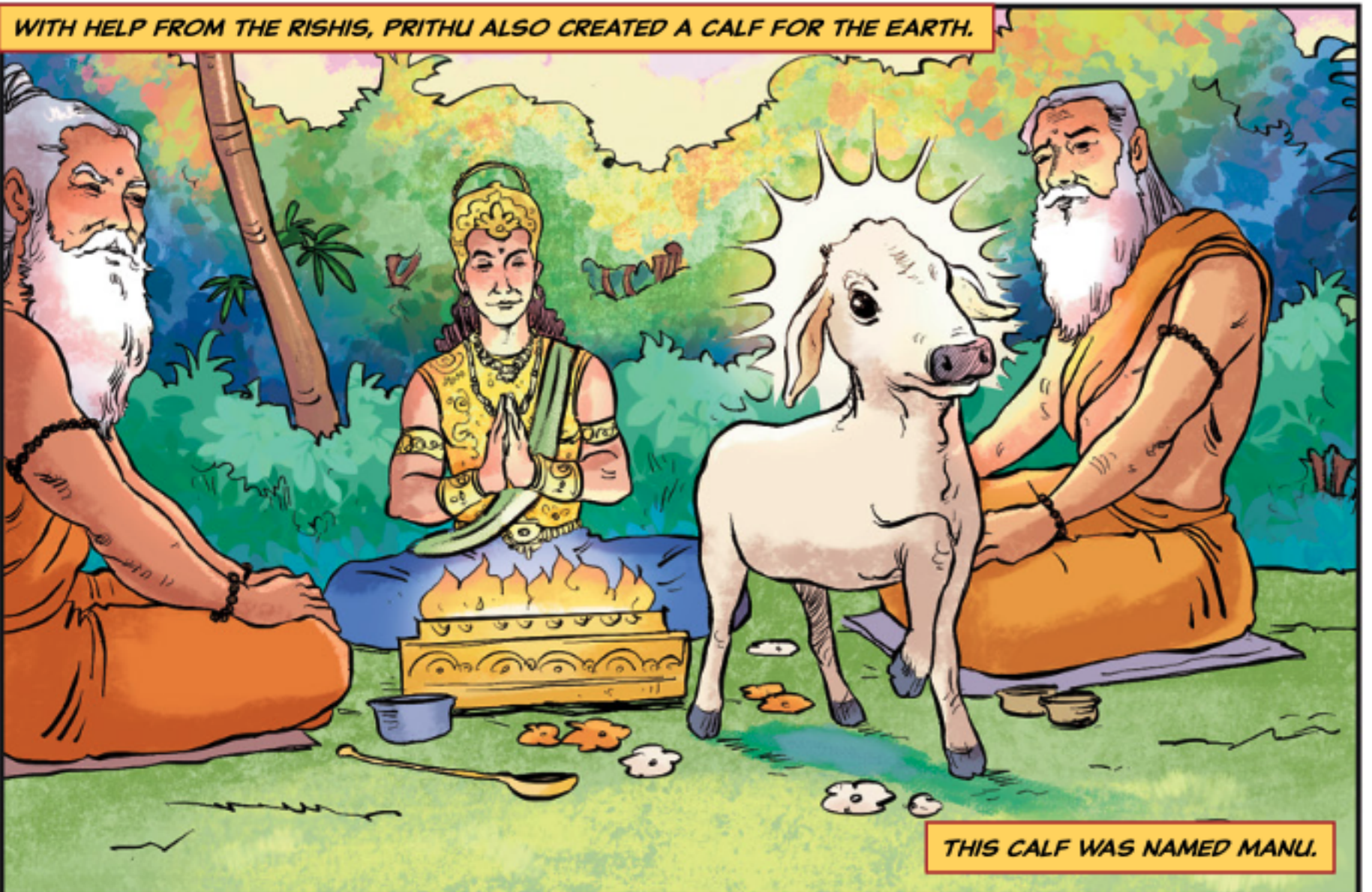
THEN, YOU MUST BRING TO ME A CALF, SO THAT I MAY CAUSE MY MILK TO FLOW TO YOUR LAND.

PRITHU DID WHAT THE EARTH HAD ASKED.

GATHER
EVERYONE AND
START LEVELLING
THE LAND. WE MUST
MAKE IT FIT FOR
THE GROWTH OF
VEGETATION.

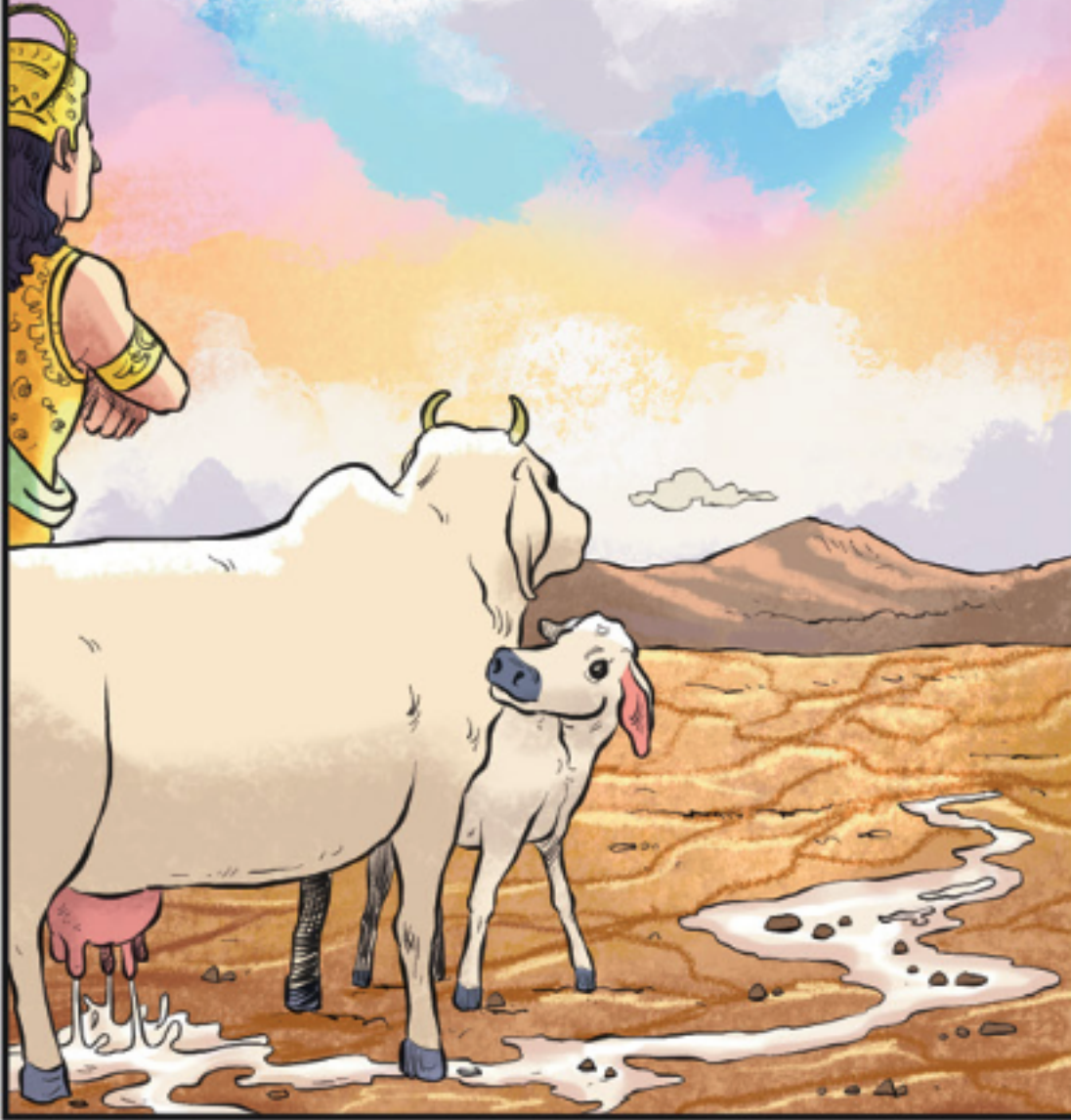
EAGER FOR THE FAMINE
TO END, THE PEOPLE
WORKED HARD AND SOON
THE LAND WAS READY.

WITH HELP FROM THE RISHIS, PRITHU ALSO CREATED A CALF FOR THE EARTH.

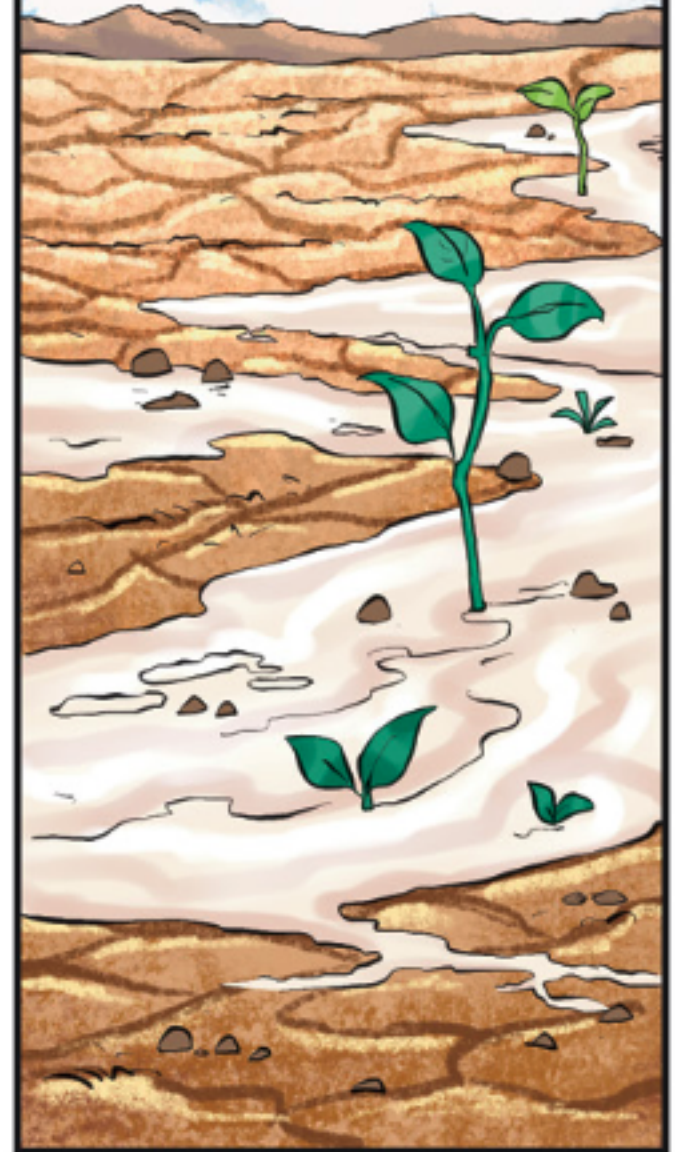


THIS CALF WAS NAMED MANU.

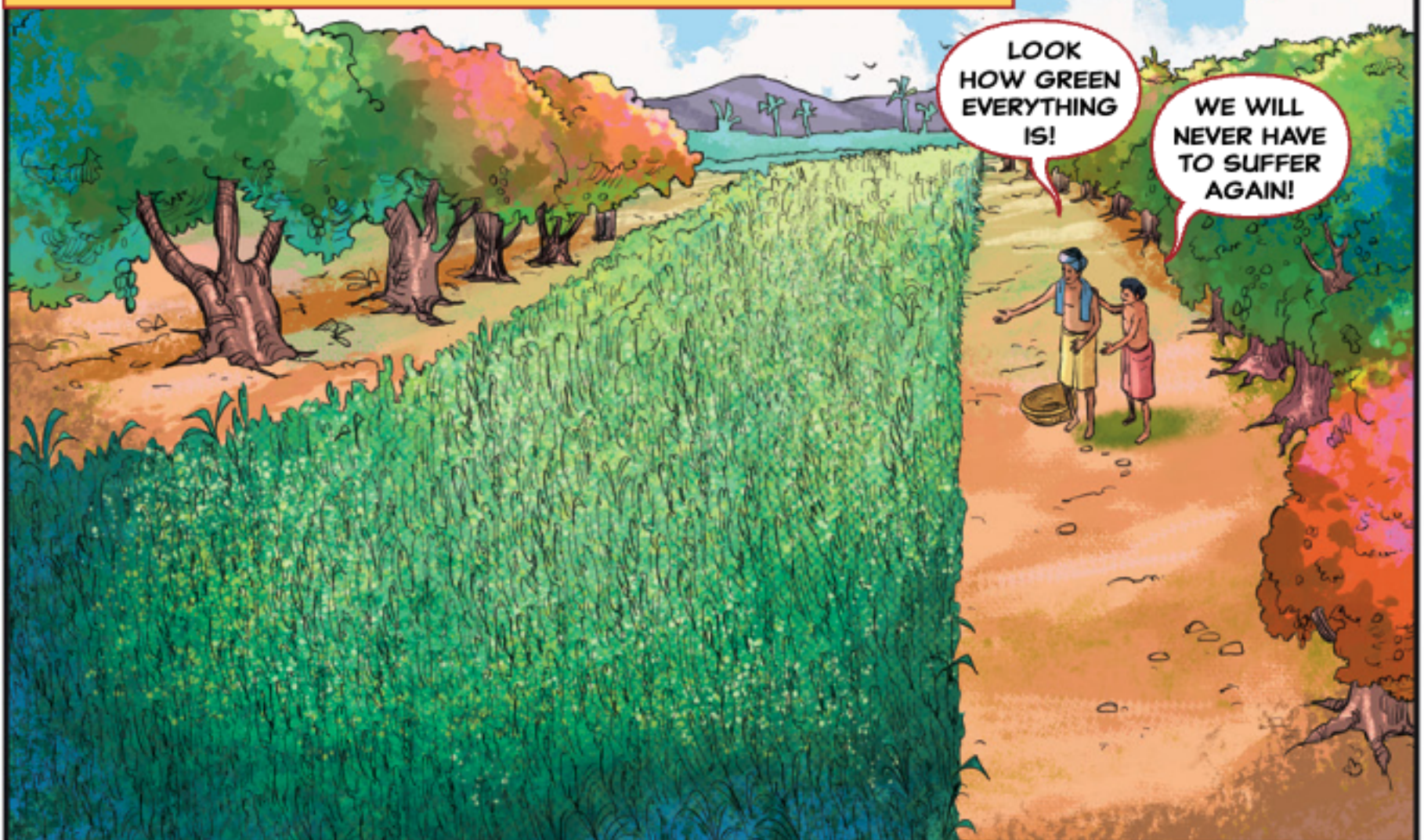
ONCE THE PREPARATIONS WERE DONE,
MOTHER EARTH CAUSED HER MILK TO
FLOW THROUGH ALL OF PRITHU'S LAND.



WHEREVER THE MILK FLOWED,
RICH VEGETATION SPROUTED.



THE LAND WAS RESTORED TO PROSPERITY, LIKE THE EARTH HAD PROMISED.



LOOK
HOW GREEN
EVERYTHING
IS!

WE WILL
NEVER HAVE
TO SUFFER
AGAIN!

IT IS SAID THAT PRITHU DOMESTICATED THE EARTH AND IT WAS DURING HIS REIGN THAT PEOPLE LEARNT HOW TO CULTIVATE THE LAND.



SINCE PRITHU ALSO GRANTED NEW LIFE TO THE EARTH, HE IS SEEN AS HER FATHER. FROM HIS NAME, CAME HERS, PRITHVI.



PUSHAN

PUSHAN, THE GOD OF SAFE JOURNEYS, PROTECTOR OF ANIMALS AND ALL THOSE WHO FEED THEM, GUIDE TO SOULS AND COMFORTER AT THE TIME OF DEATH, IS ALSO ONE OF THE 12 FORMS OF SURYA, WHOSE PATH HE LEADS.

PUSHAN IS CROSSING THE SKIES ALONG WITH SURYA. MAY HE LOOK AFTER MY HERD AND PROTECT THEM FROM WOLVES AND TIGERS.



ONCE, PUSHAN WAS INVITED TO A VERY IMPORTANT YAGNA, CONDUCTED BY PRAJAPATI DAKSHA.

WELCOME, PUSHAN. DO JUSTICE TO THE OFFERINGS THAT ARE POURED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.

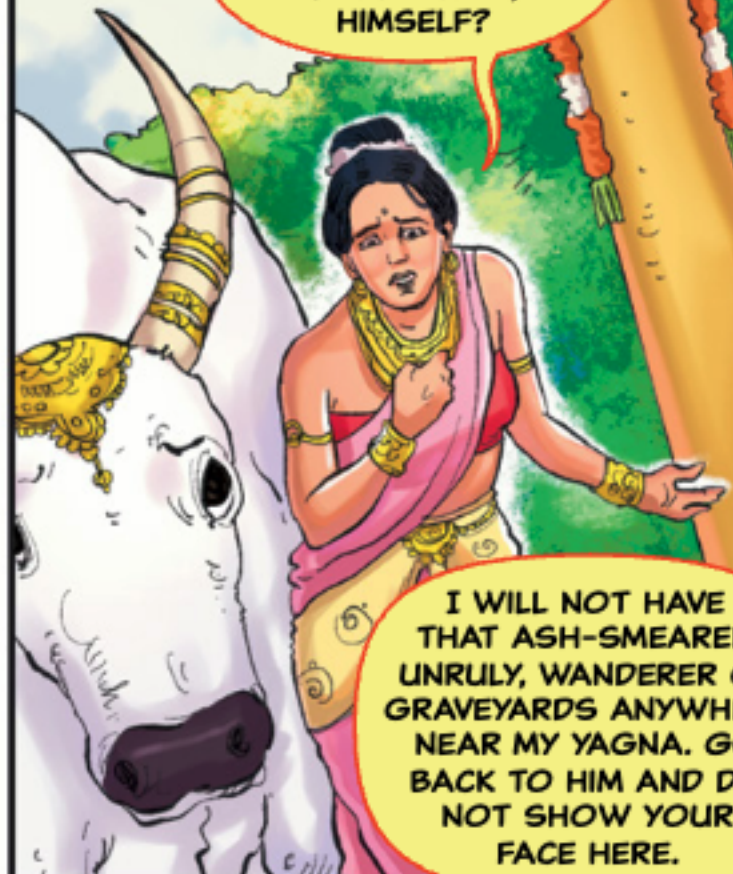


I WILL DO MY DUTY, O KING.

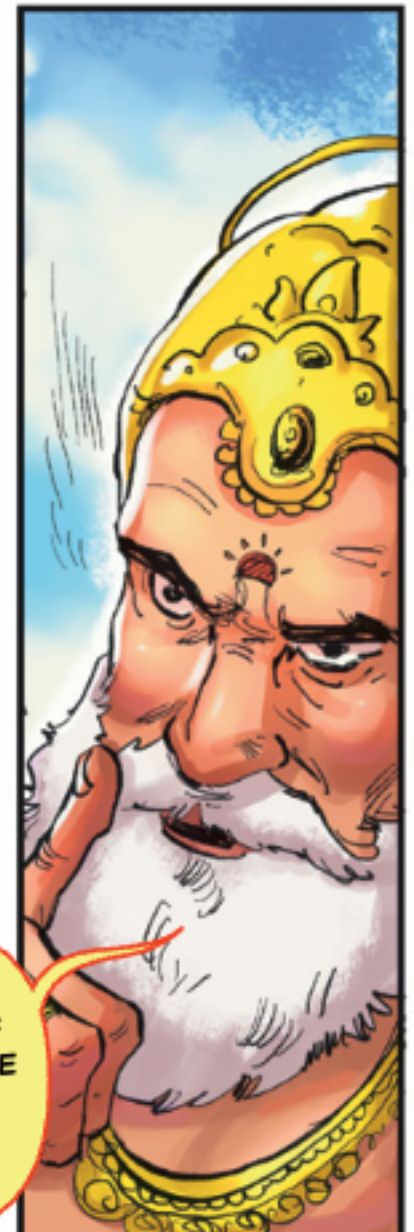
IT WAS ALSO PUSHAN'S DUTY TO CONSUME THE OFFERINGS THAT WERE MADE INTO THE HOLY FIRE DURING A YAGNA.

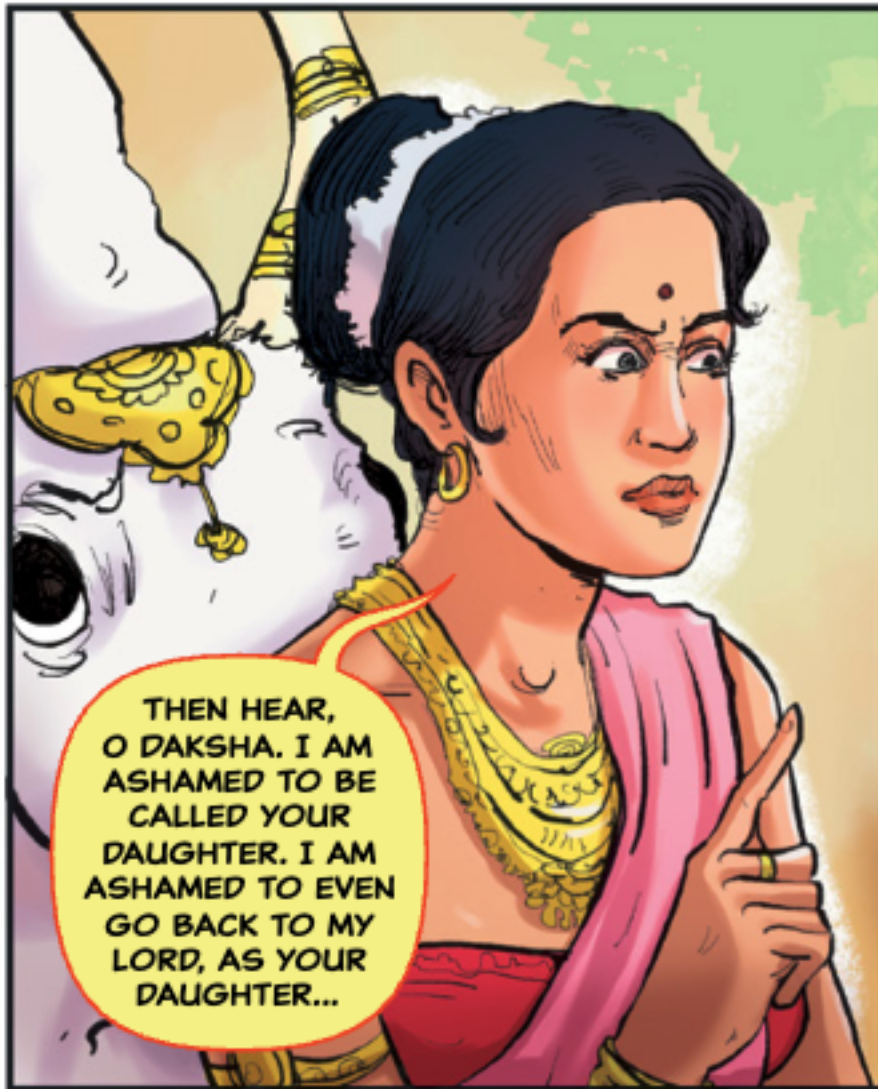
THE YAGNA WAS UNDERWAY WHEN DAKSHA'S DAUGHTER SATI ARRIVED.

FATHER, HOW COULD YOU NEGLECT TO INVITE YOUR SON-IN-LAW AND MY HUSBAND, THE GREAT LORD SHIVA, HIMSELF?

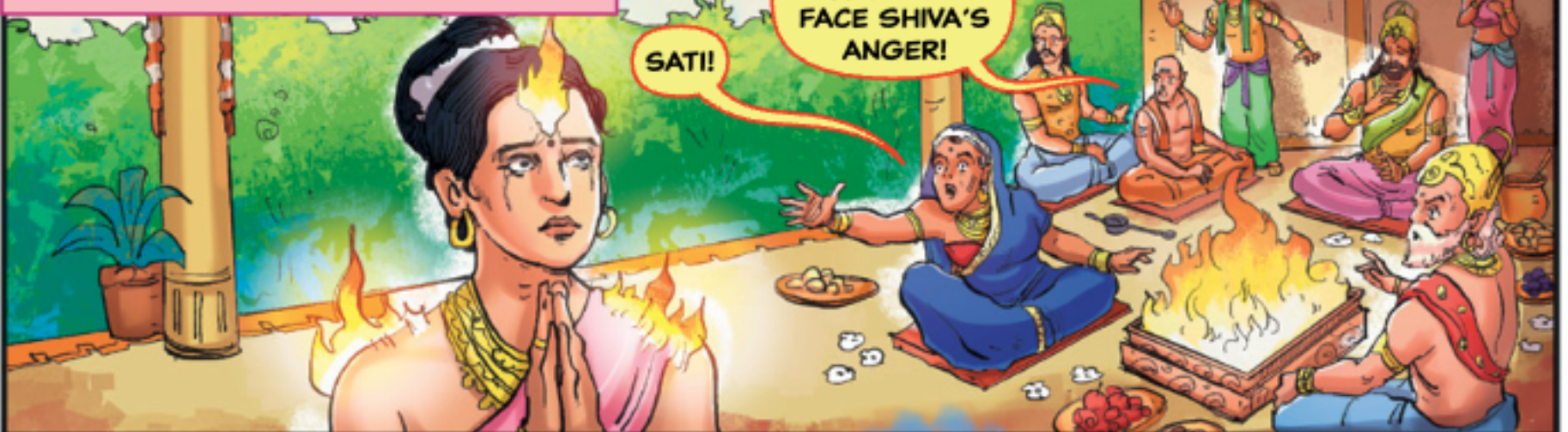


I WILL NOT HAVE THAT ASH-SMEARED, UNRULY, WANDERER OF GRAVEYARDS ANYWHERE NEAR MY YAGNA. GO BACK TO HIM AND DO NOT SHOW YOUR FACE HERE.





SUMMONING ALL HER STRENGTH, SATI TURNED HERSELF INTO A PILLAR OF FIRE.



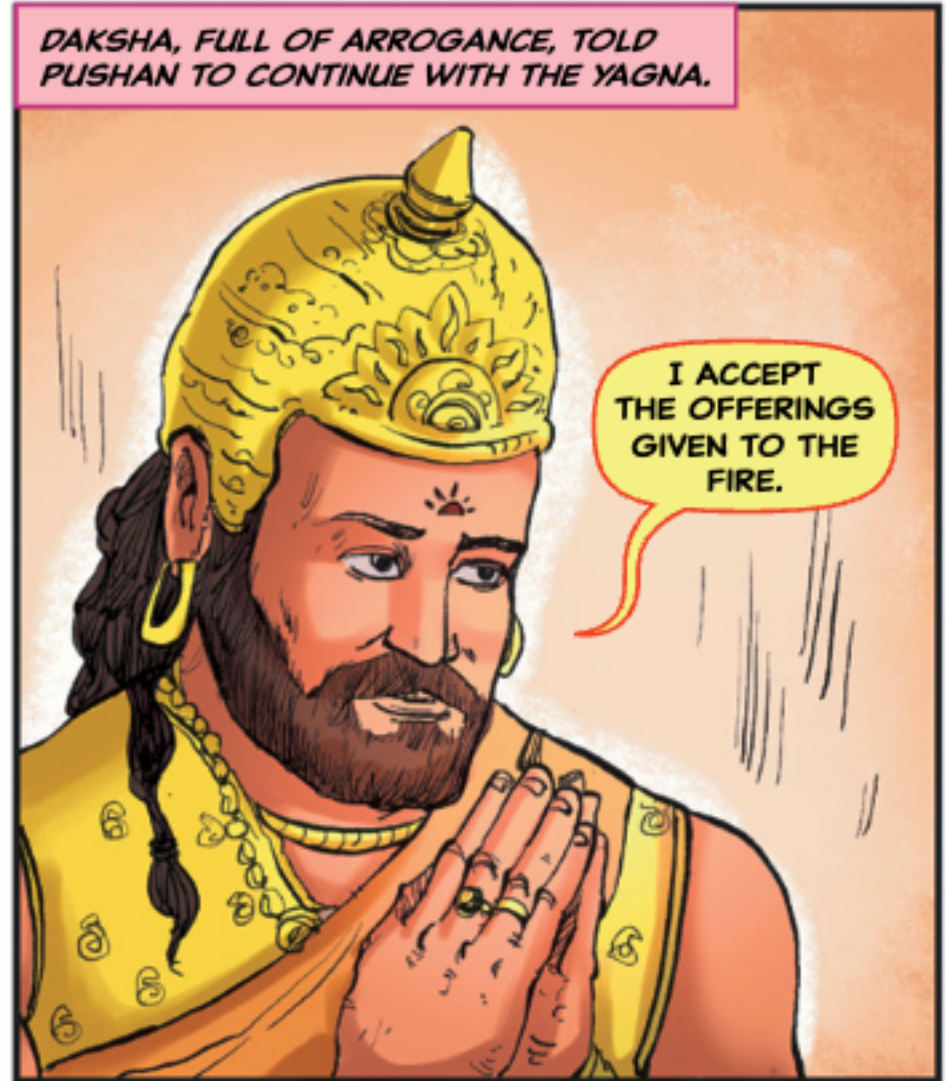
WHEN SHIVA HEARD OF SATI'S DEATH, HIS GRIEF KNEW NO BOUNDS.



MEANWHILE —

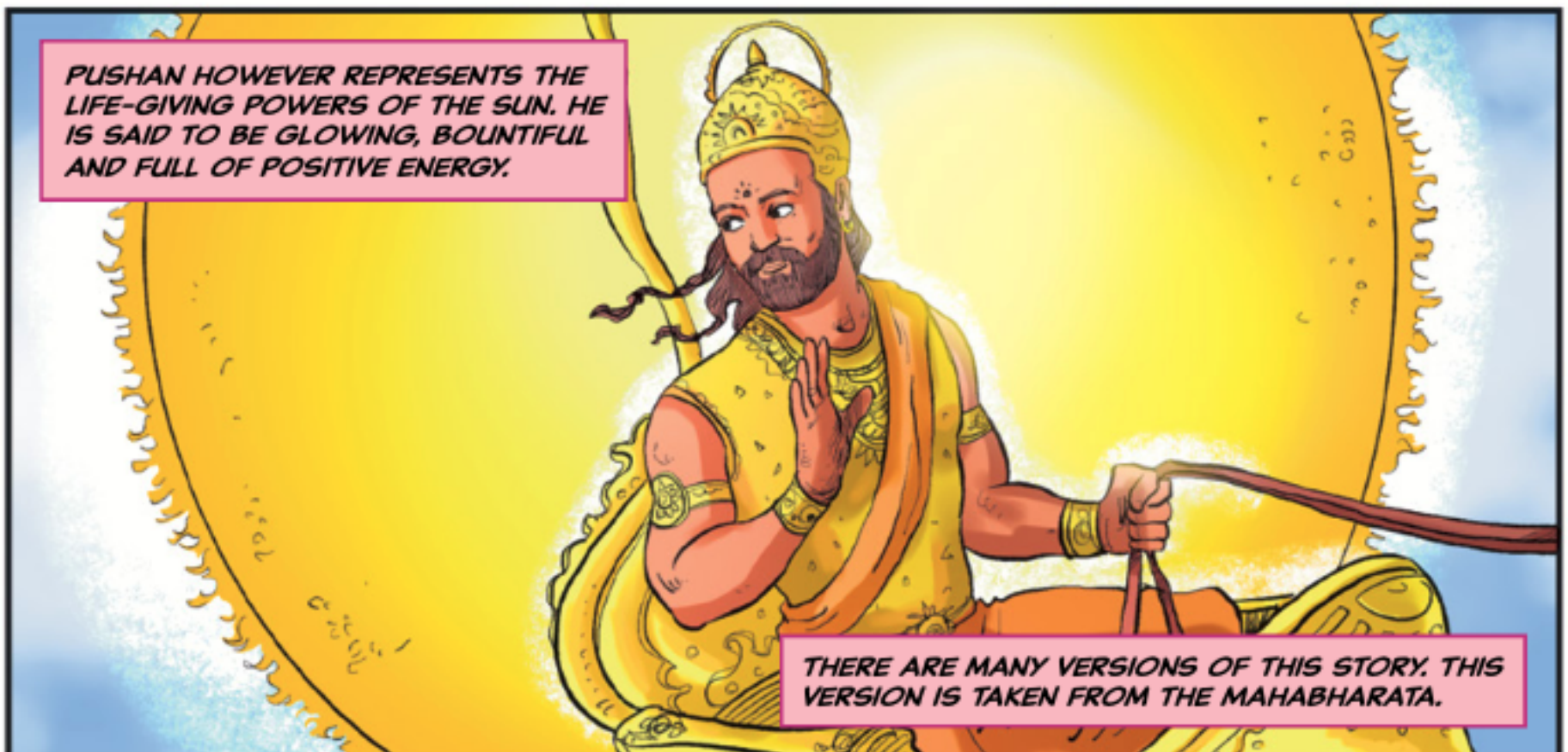
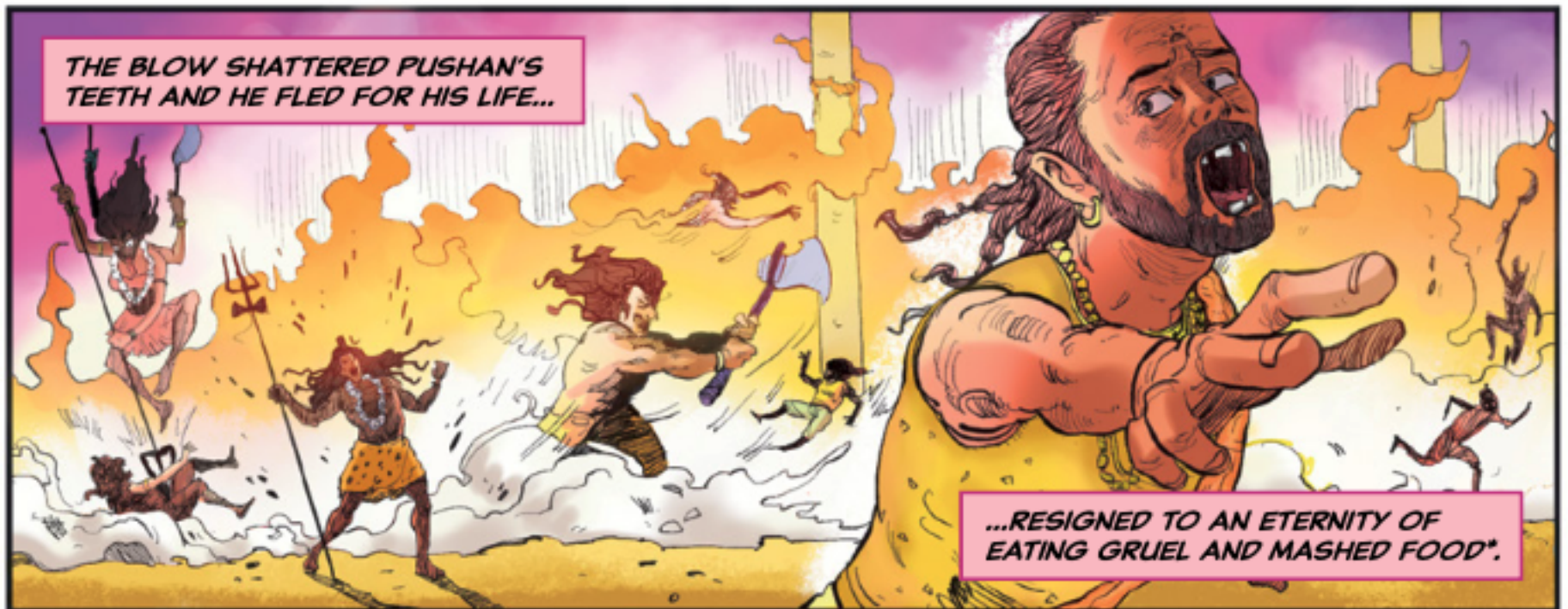


DAKSHA, FULL OF ARROGANCE, TOLD PUSHAN TO CONTINUE WITH THE YAGNA.



EAR-SPLITTING SCREAMING AND HUMMING RENT THE AIR.





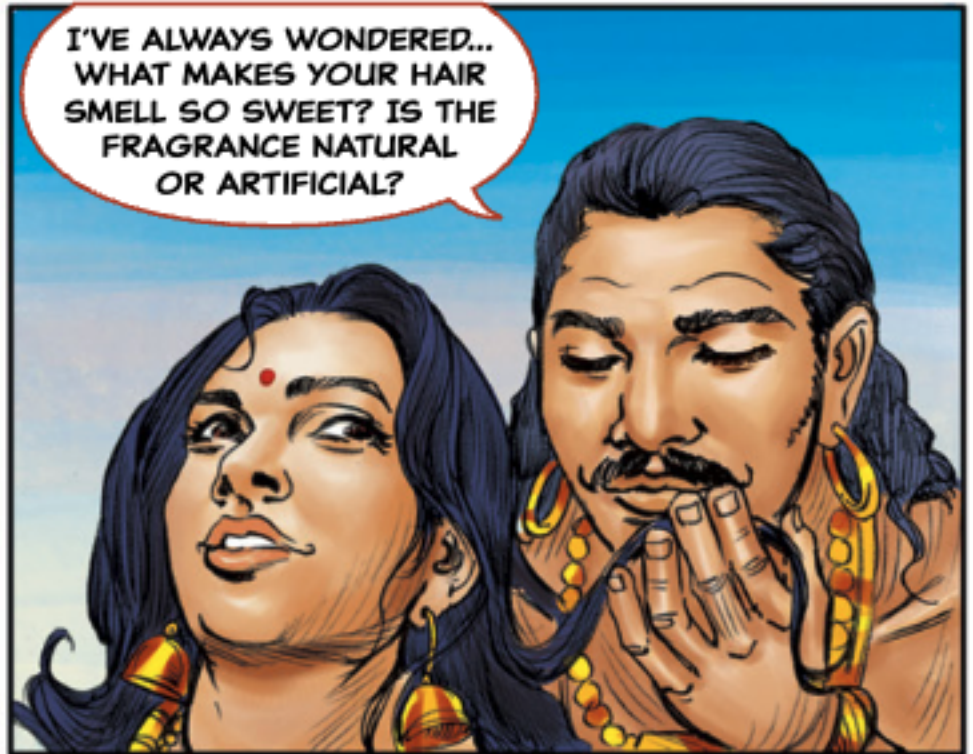
*IT IS ALSO BELIEVED THAT PUSHAN'S TEETH BECAME STARS IN THE MILKY WAY.

RUDRA

IT WAS A SUMMER EVENING. KING SHENBAGA PANDIAN WAS TAKING A STROLL THROUGH THE PALACE GARDENS WITH HIS WIFE.



I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED... WHAT MAKES YOUR HAIR SMELL SO SWEET? IS THE FRAGRANCE NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL?



SUCH IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ARE BETTER POSED TO SCHOLARS.



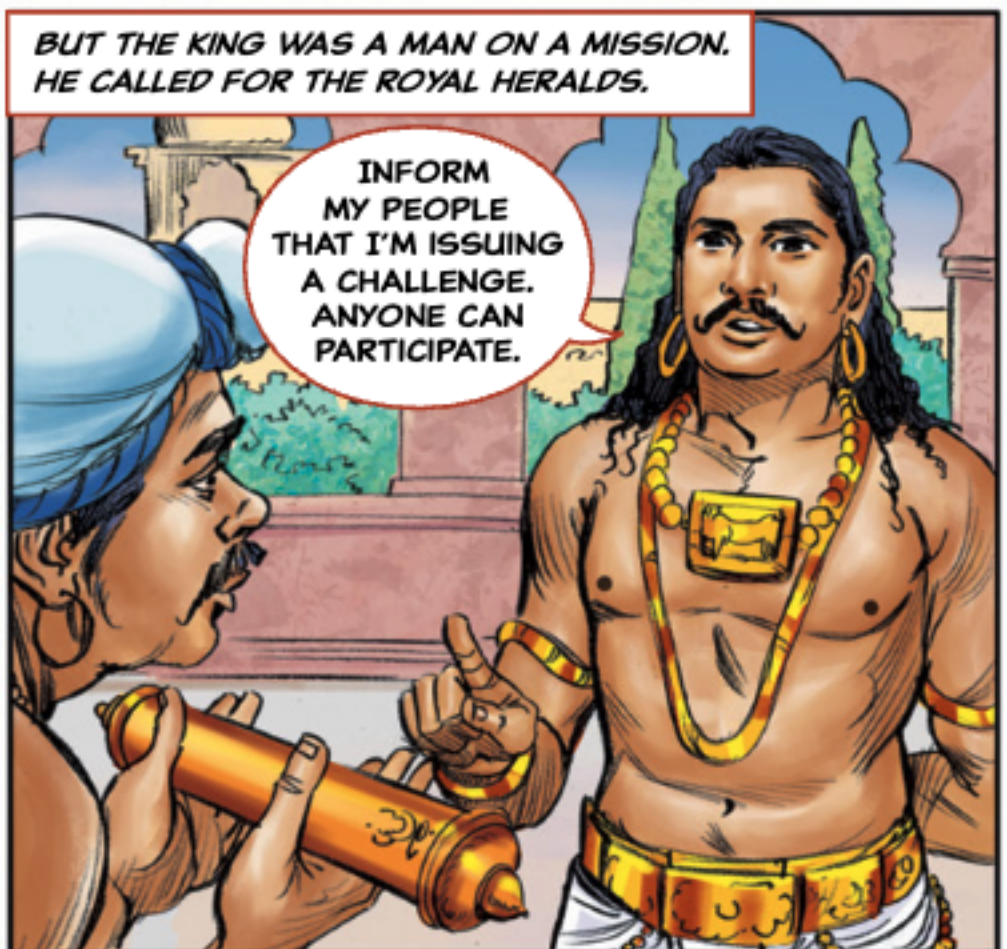
GOOD IDEA!

I SAID THAT IN JEST.



BUT THE KING WAS A MAN ON A MISSION. HE CALLED FOR THE ROYAL HERALDS.

INFORM MY PEOPLE THAT I'M ISSUING A CHALLENGE. ANYONE CAN PARTICIPATE.



AS THE HERALDS MADE THEIR ANNOUNCEMENT, A CURIOUS CROWD GATHERED BELOW.

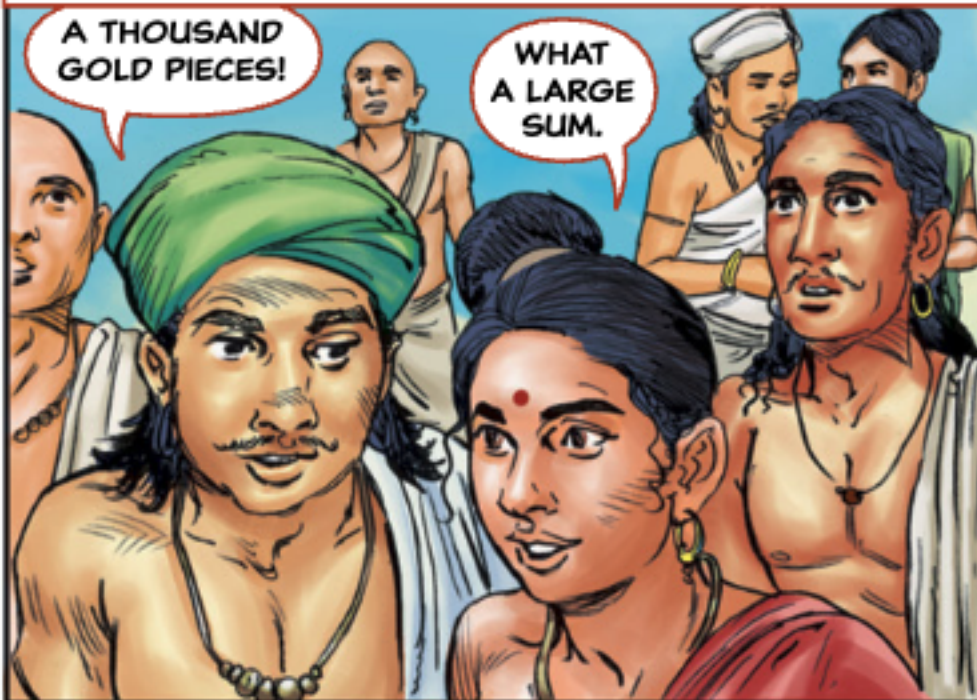


HEAR YE! HEAR YE! IS THE FRAGRANCE OF A WOMAN'S HAIR NATURAL OR DOES IT COME FROM SOMETHING ELSE? THE KING IS OFFERING A THOUSAND GOLD PIECES TO ANYONE WHO CAN ANSWER HIS QUESTION.

AMONG THE CROWD WAS A PULAVAR* NAMED THARUMI.

A THOUSAND GOLD PIECES!

WHAT A LARGE SUM.

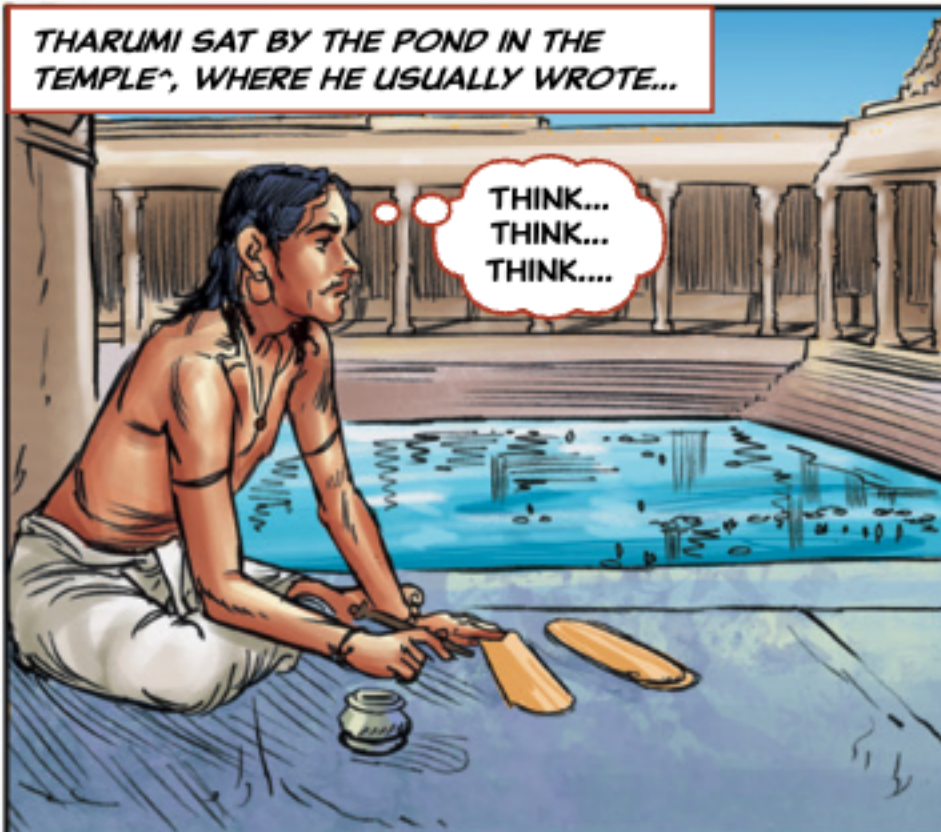


IF I COULD WIN THAT REWARD, MY DAYS OF POVERTY WOULD BE OVER!



THARUMI SAT BY THE POND IN THE TEMPLE*, WHERE HE USUALLY WROTE...

THINK... THINK... THINK...



...BUT, TRY AS HE MIGHT, NO WORDS WOULD COME TO HIS OVEREAGER MIND.

AARGH!



AS THARUMI CONTINUED TO LAMENT...

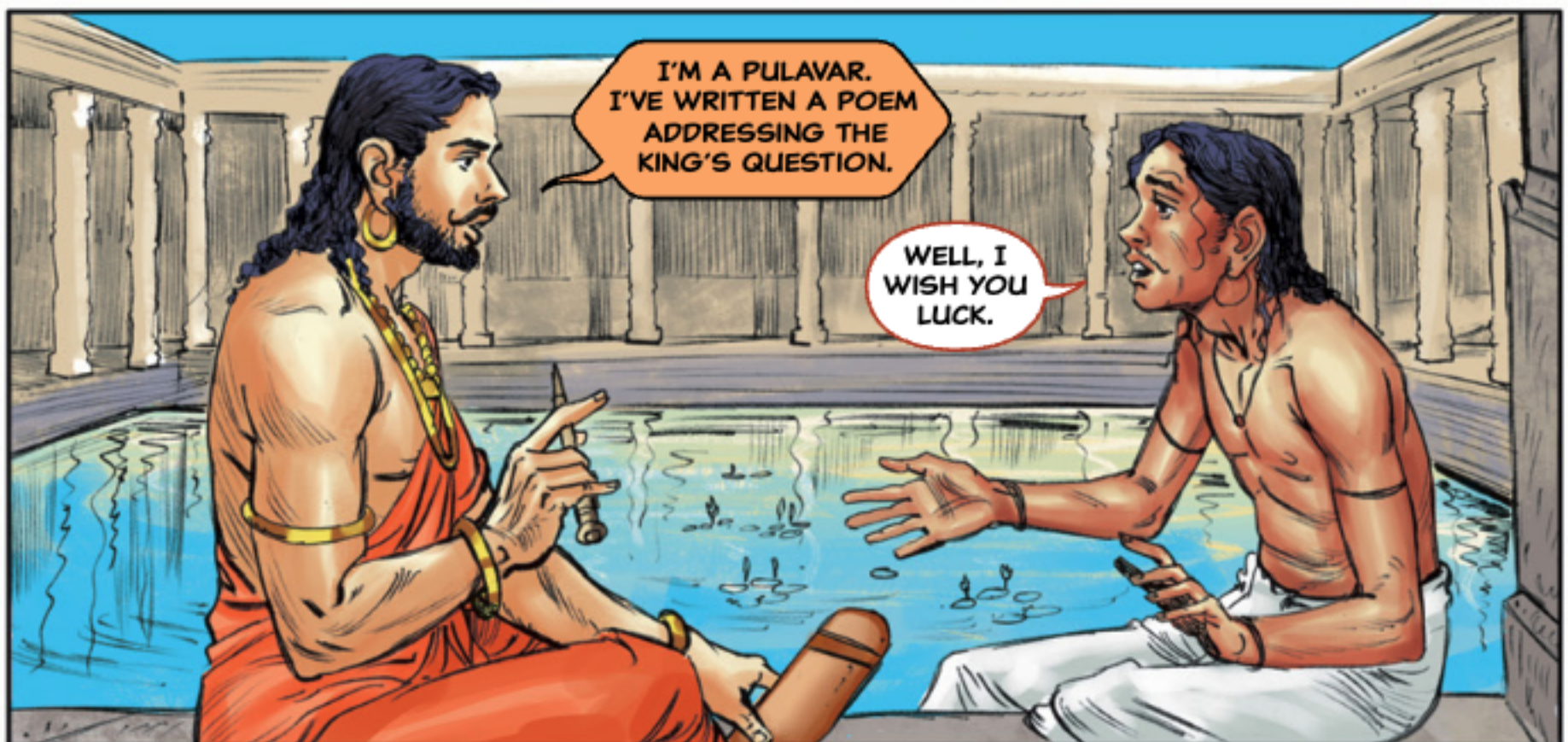
SOKKANATHARE*!
WHY HAVE YOU ABANDONED
YOUR FAITHFUL DEVOTEE?
WON'T YOU HELP ME?

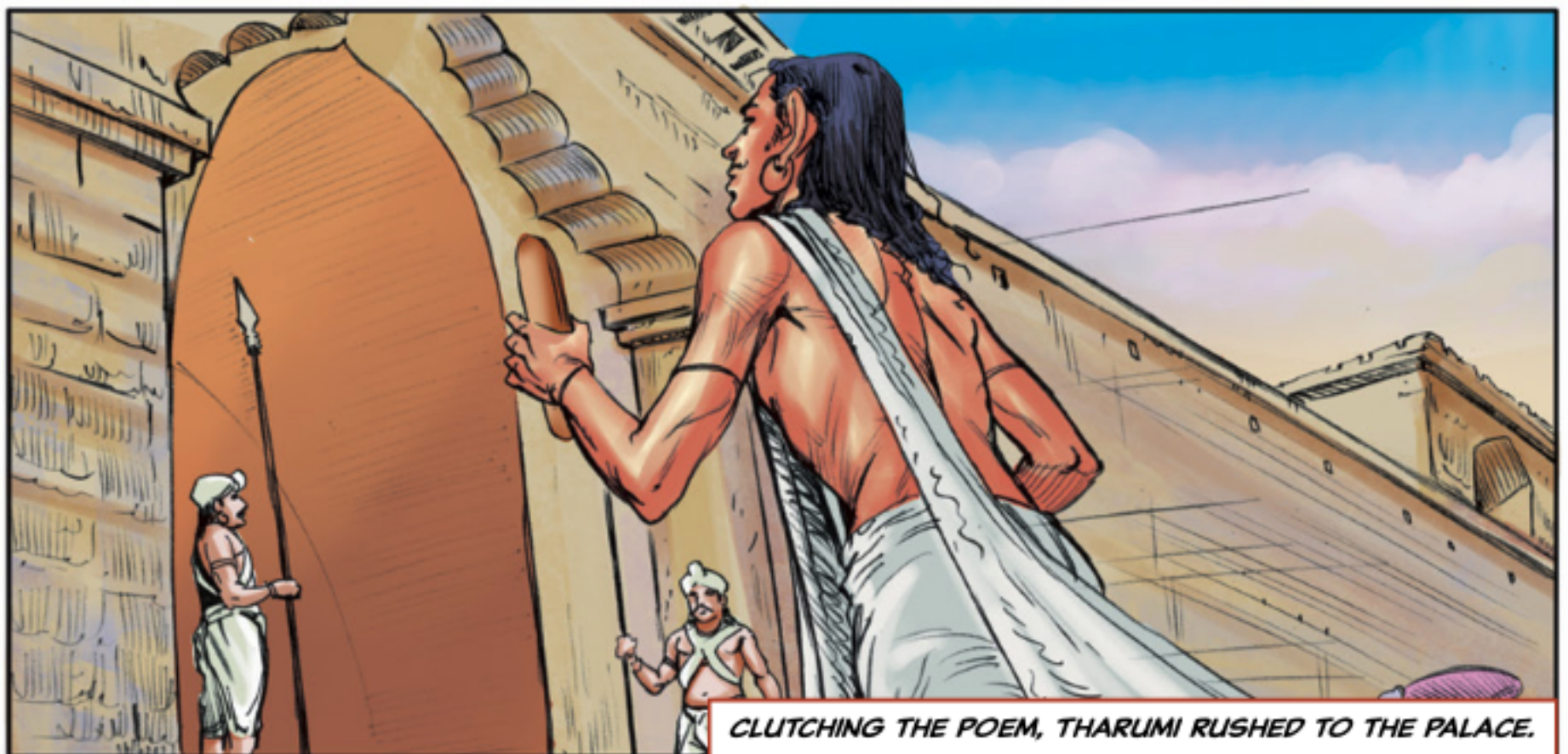
...HE DID NOT NOTICE THE FIGURE THAT ROSE OUT OF THE POND.

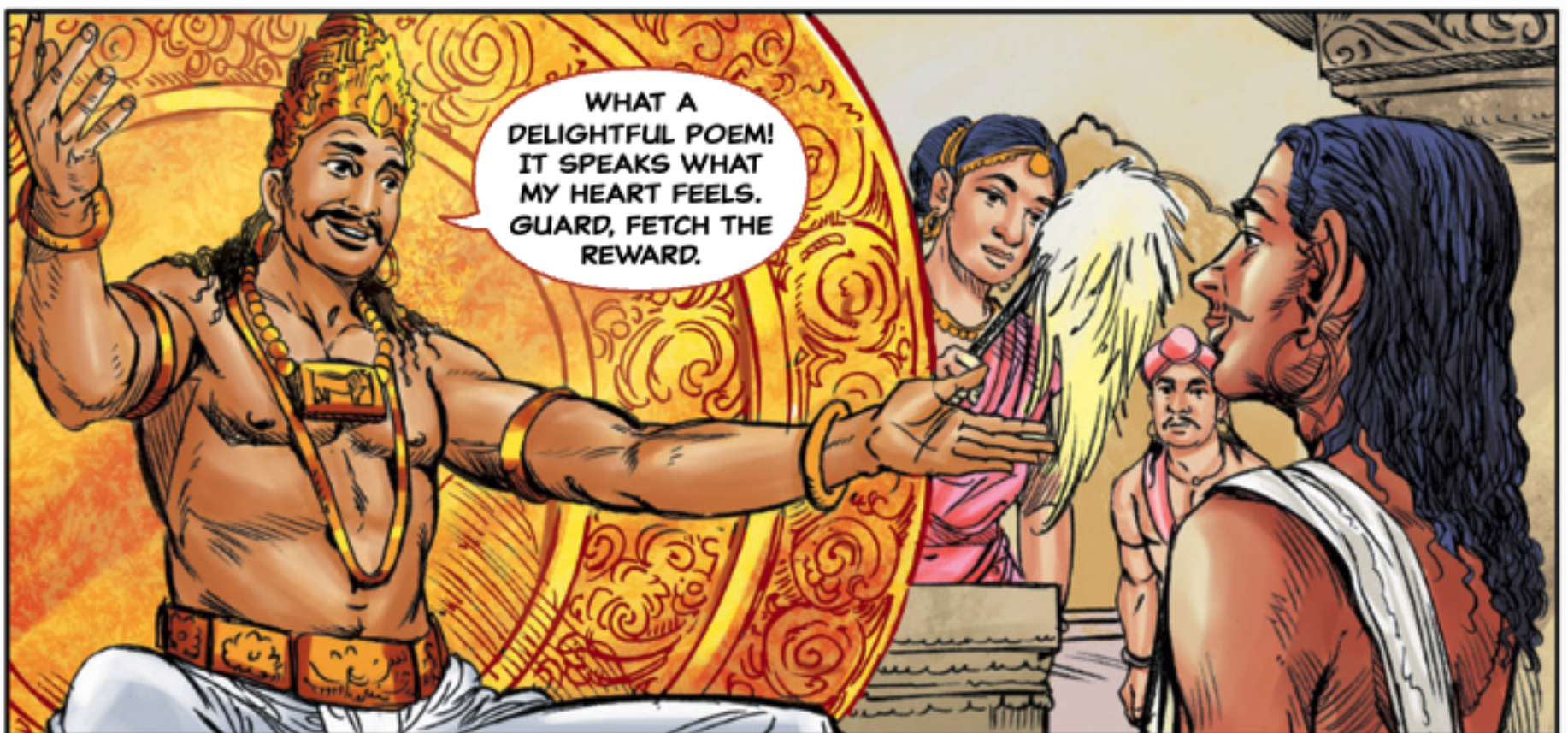
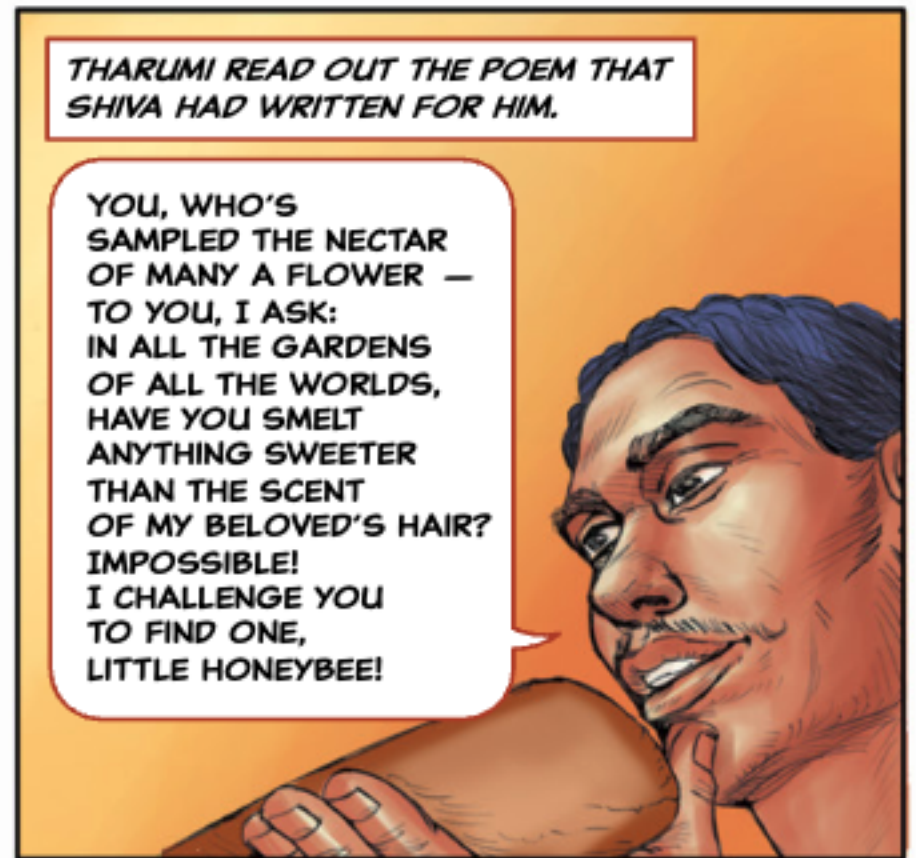
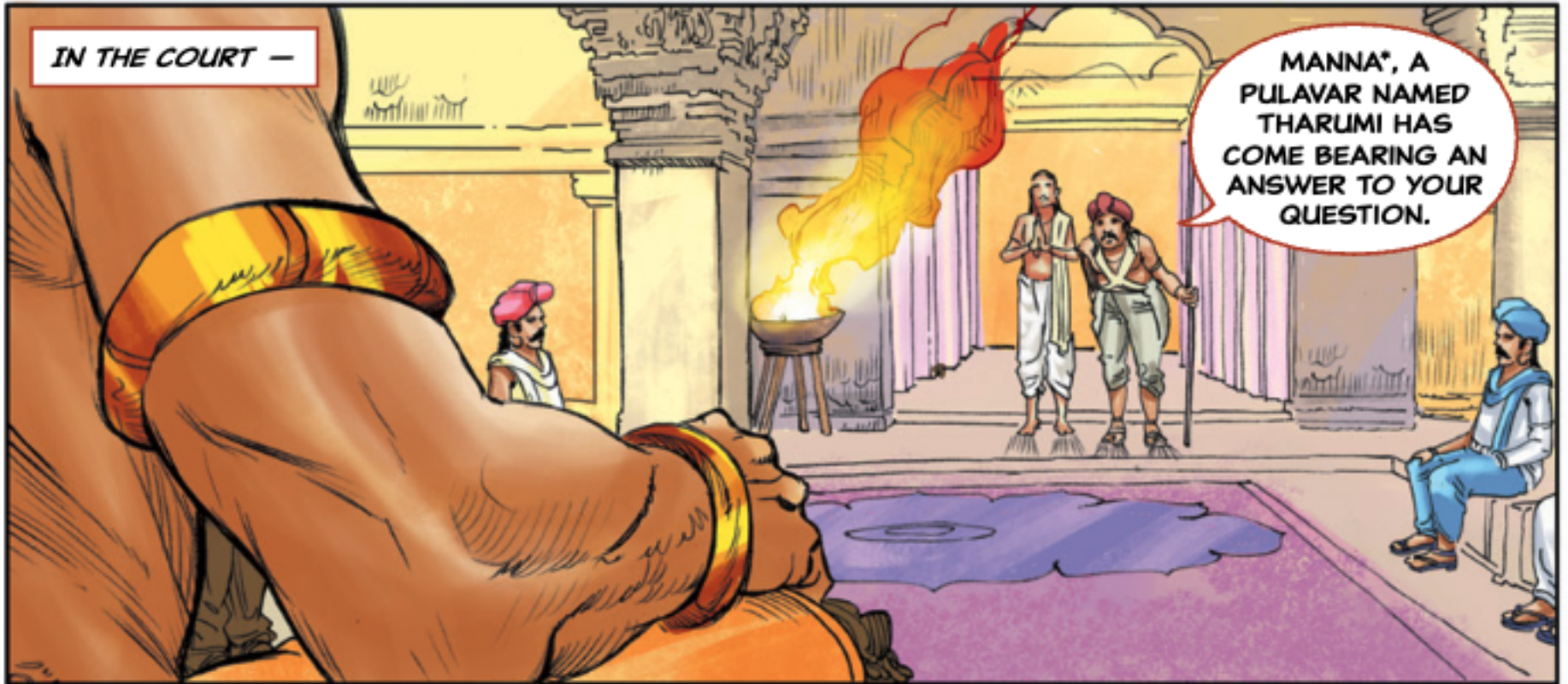
IT WAS SHIVA...

...IN ONE OF HIS MANY DISGUISES.

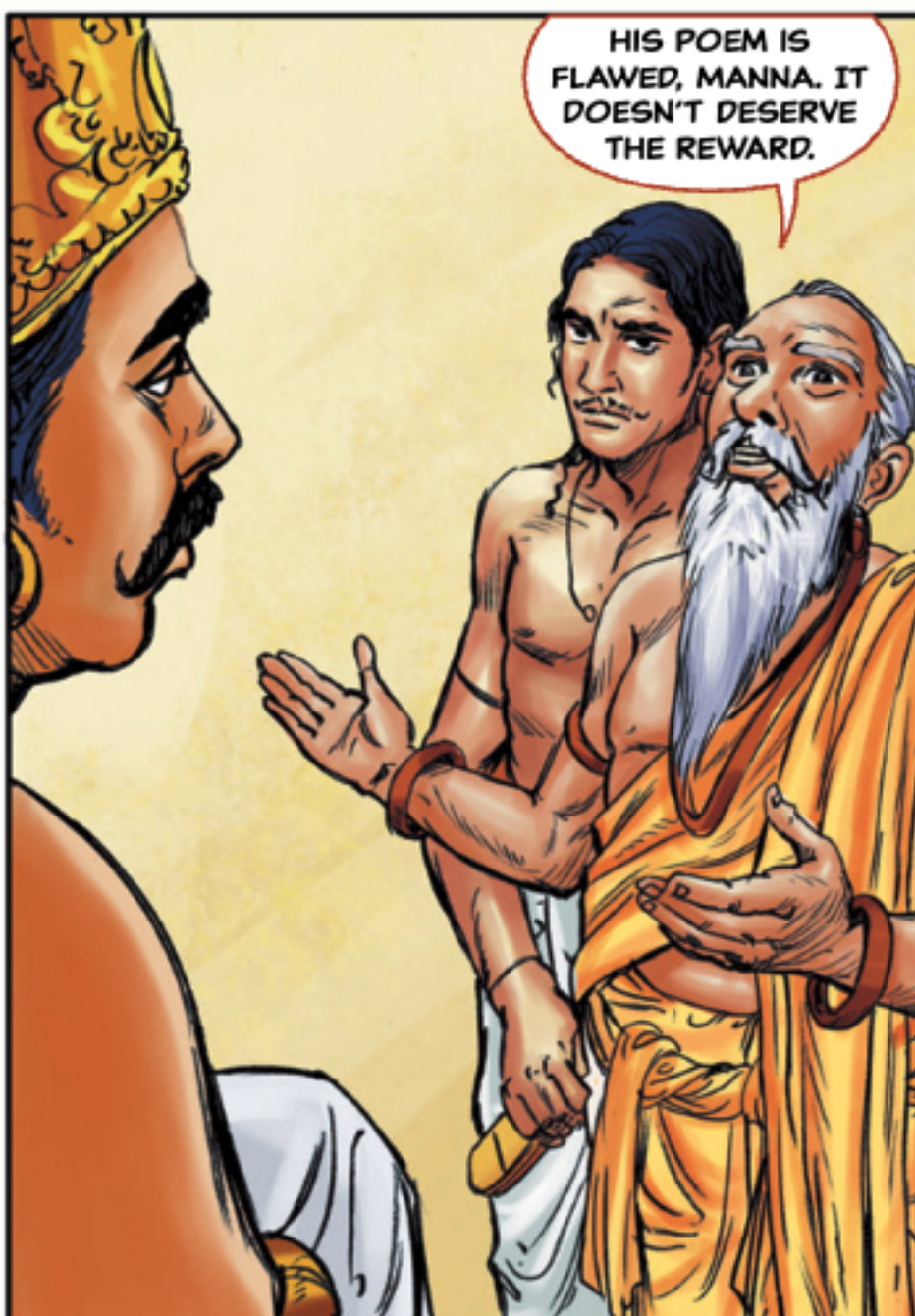
*ANOTHER NAME FOR SHIVA



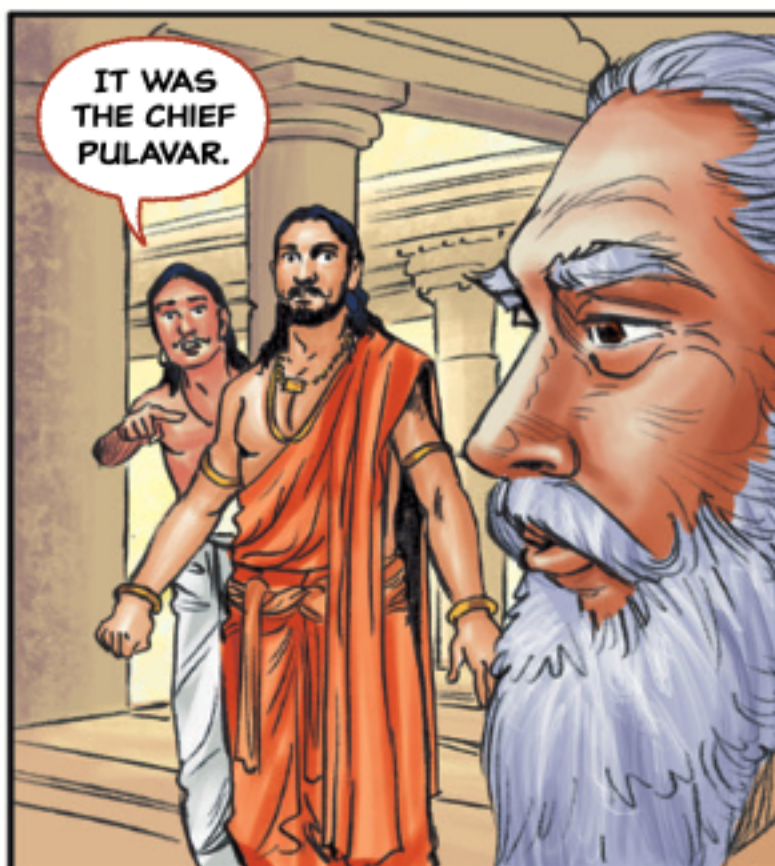
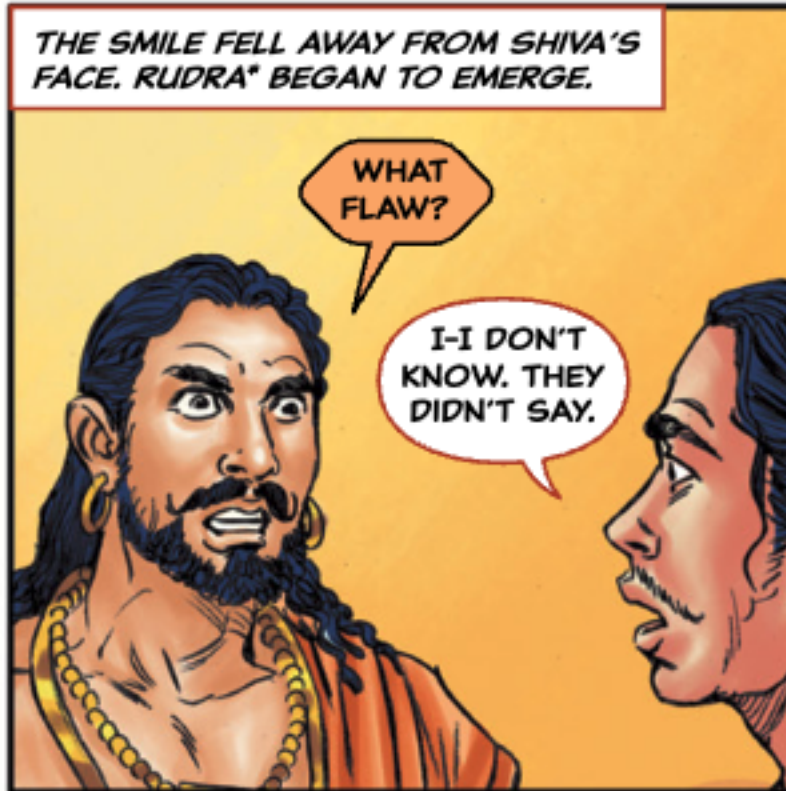




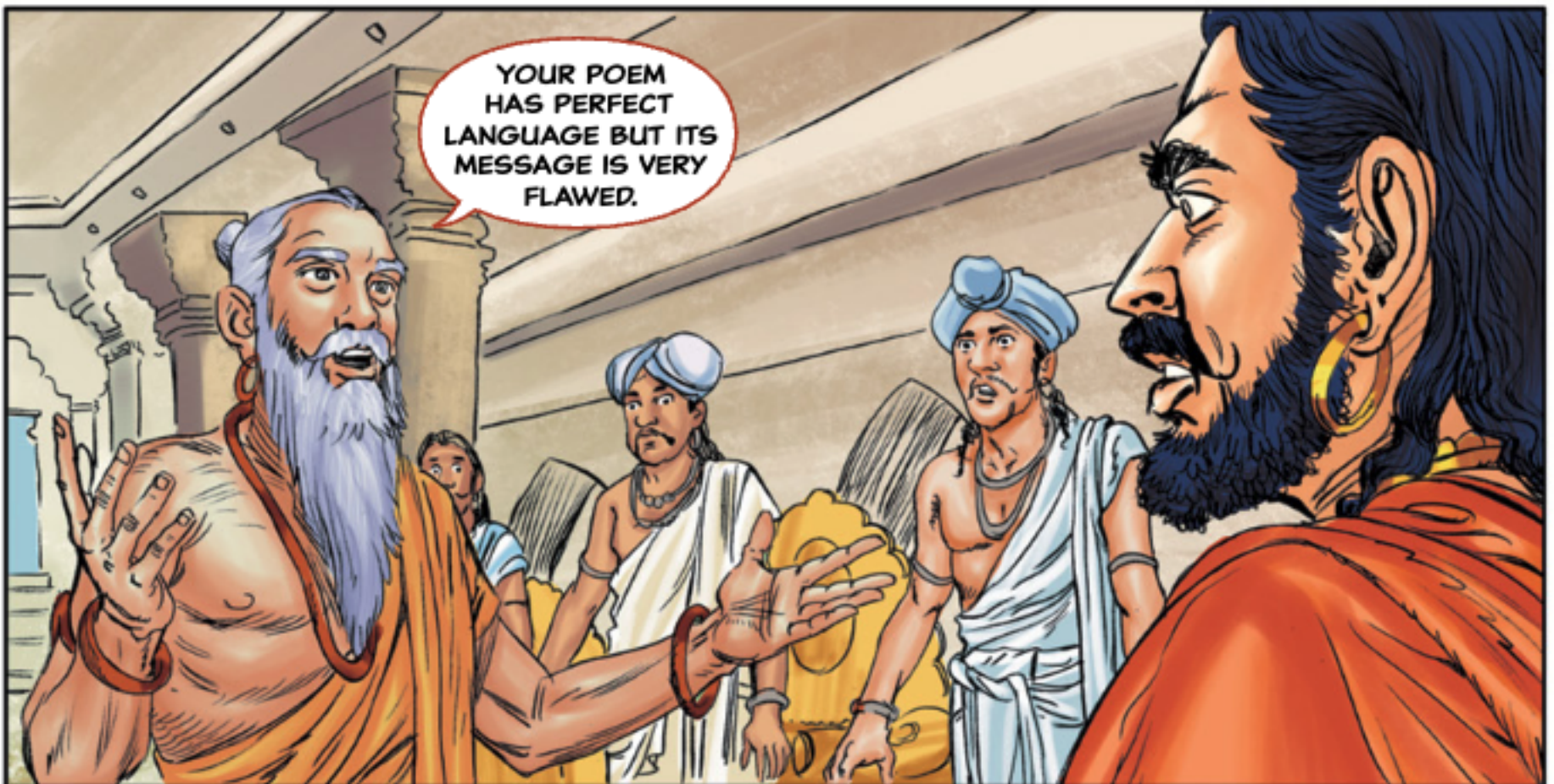
BUT JUST AS THE REWARD WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE HANDS, AN ORDER RANG OUT —

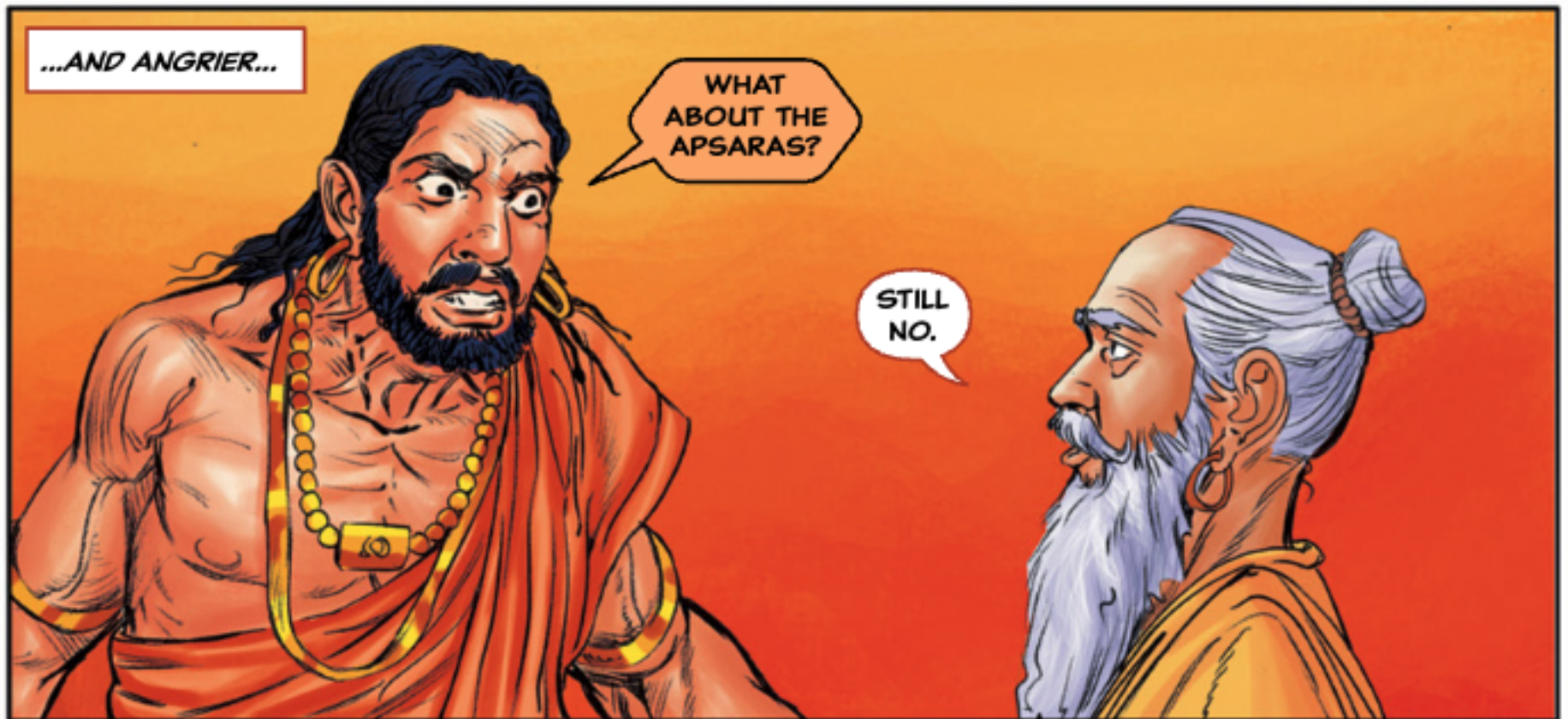




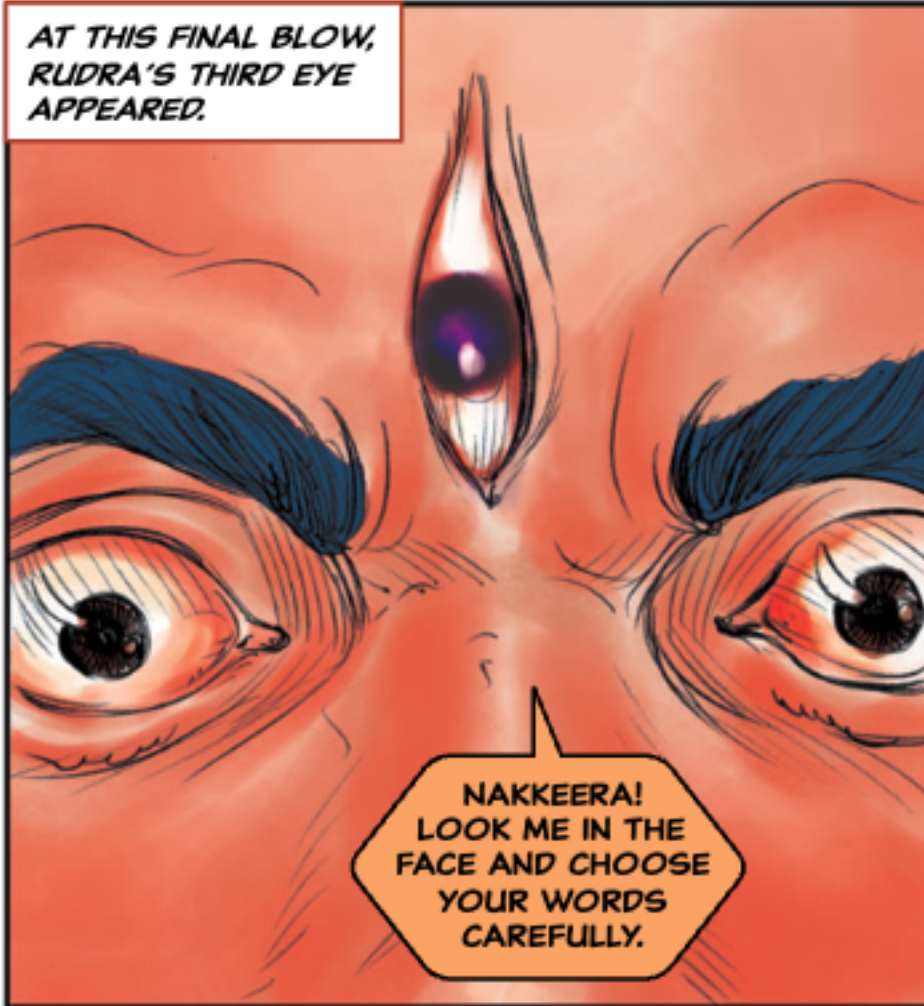


*A FIERCE AVATAR OF SHIVA



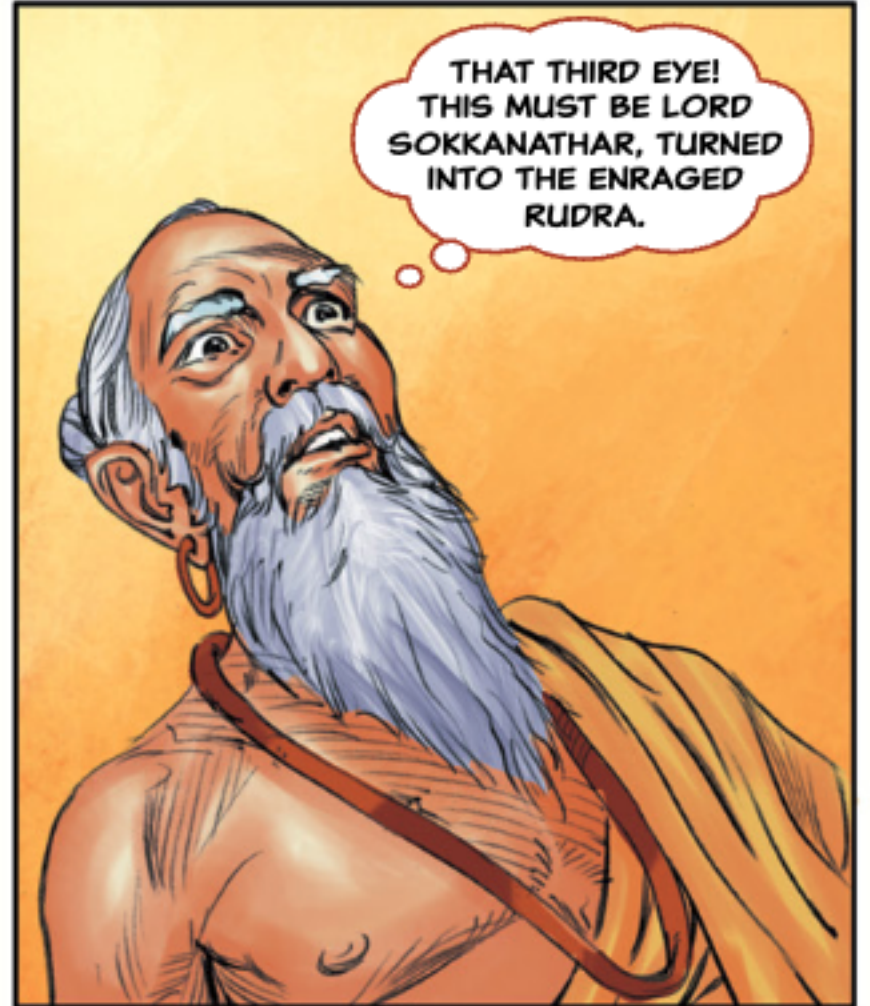


AT THIS FINAL BLOW,
RUDRA'S THIRD EYE
APPEARED.



NAKKEERA!
LOOK ME IN THE
FACE AND CHOOSE
YOUR WORDS
CAREFULLY.

THAT THIRD EYE!
THIS MUST BE LORD
SOKKANATHAR, TURNED
INTO THE ENRAGED
RUDRA.

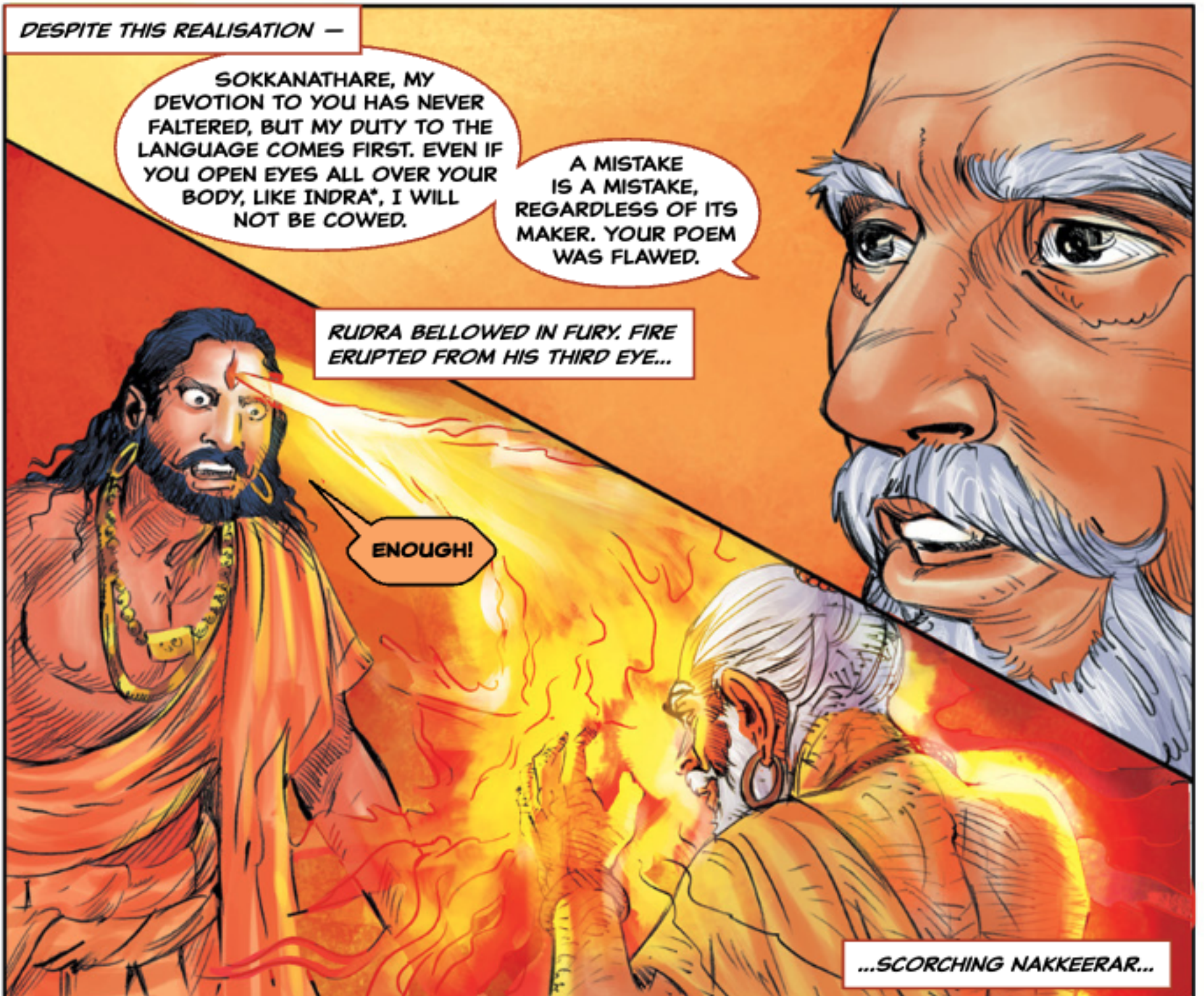


DESPITE THIS REALISATION —

SOKKANATHARE, MY
DEVOTION TO YOU HAS NEVER
FALTERED, BUT MY DUTY TO THE
LANGUAGE COMES FIRST. EVEN IF
YOU OPEN EYES ALL OVER YOUR
BODY, LIKE INDRA*, I WILL
NOT BE COWED.

A MISTAKE
IS A MISTAKE,
REGARDLESS OF ITS
MAKER. YOUR POEM
WAS FLAWED.

RUDRA BELLOWED IN FURY. FIRE
ERUPTED FROM HIS THIRD EYE...



ENOUGH!

...SCORCHING NAKKEERAR...

*A REFERENCE TO THE STORY OF INDRA, WHO WAS CURSED WITH A
THOUSAND EYES FOR COVETING AHALYA, THE WIFE OF SAGE GAUTAMA

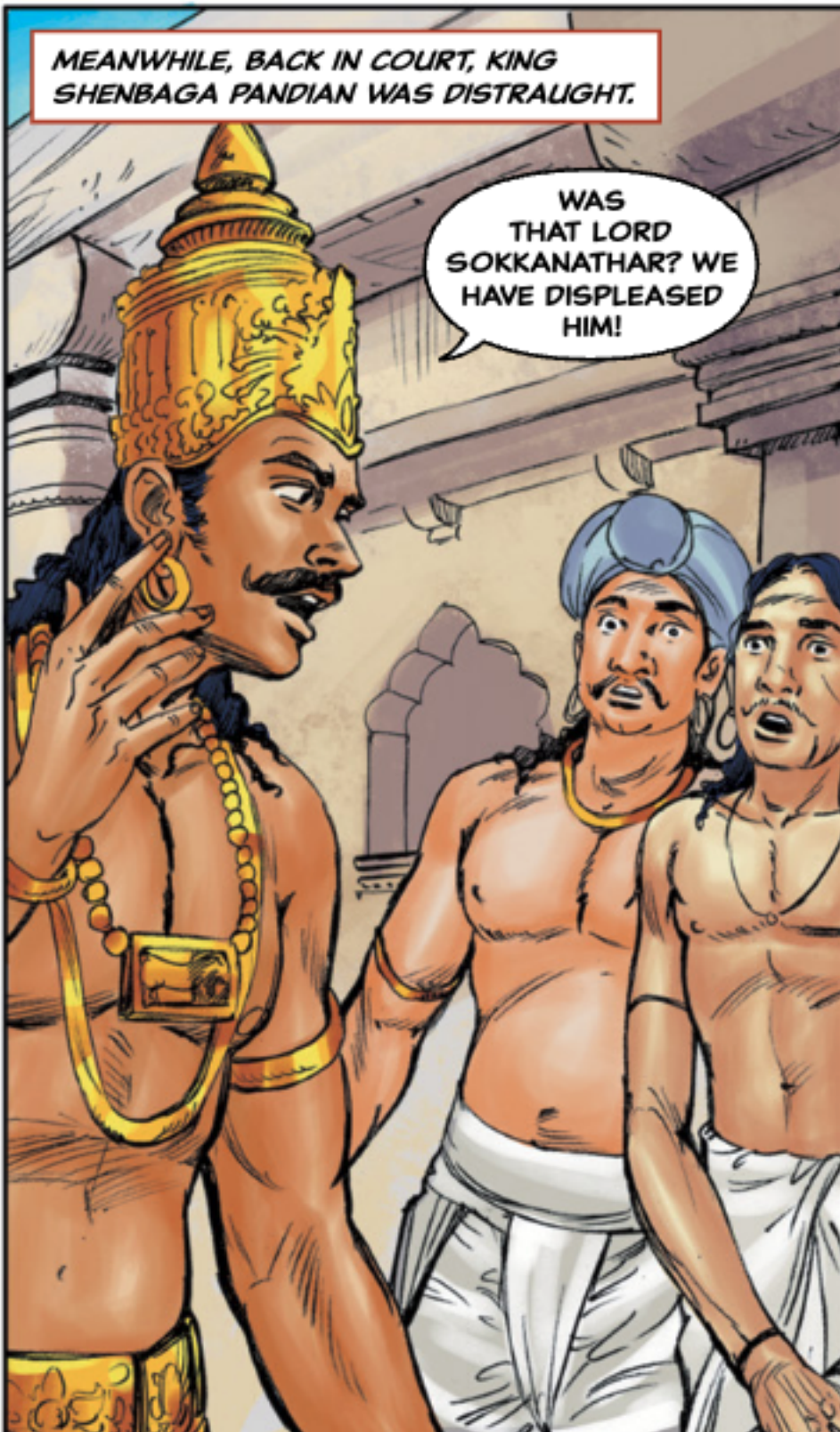
...WHO HAD TO SEEK REFUGE IN THE COOL WATERS OF THE TEMPLE POND.



SO GREAT WAS RUDRA'S ANGER THAT THE EARTH TREMBLED. HE STORMED AWAY.

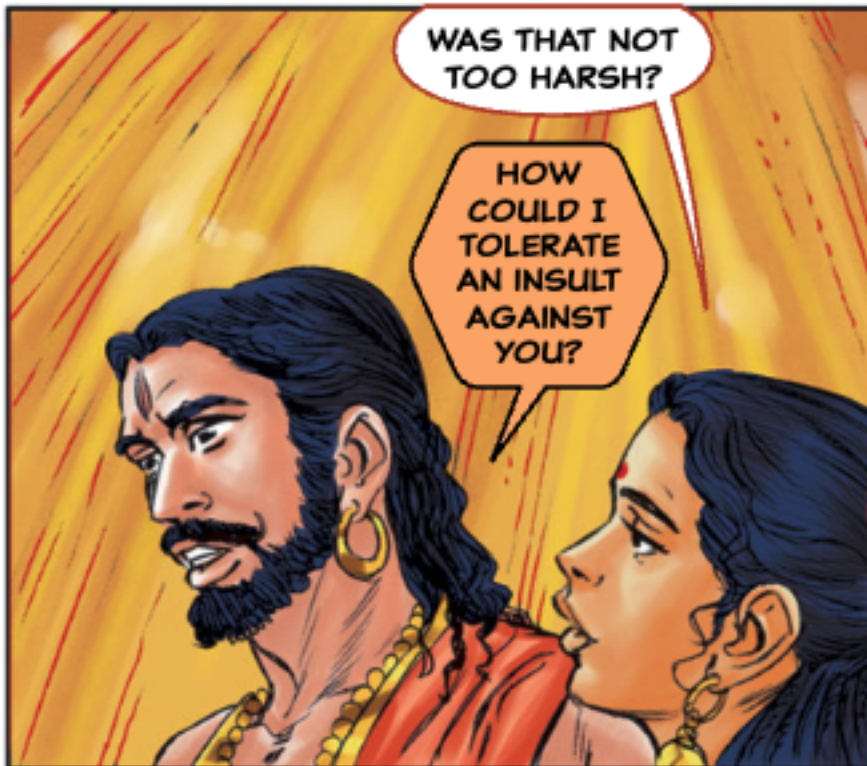


MEANWHILE, BACK IN COURT, KING SHENBAGA PANDIAN WAS DISTRAUGHT.

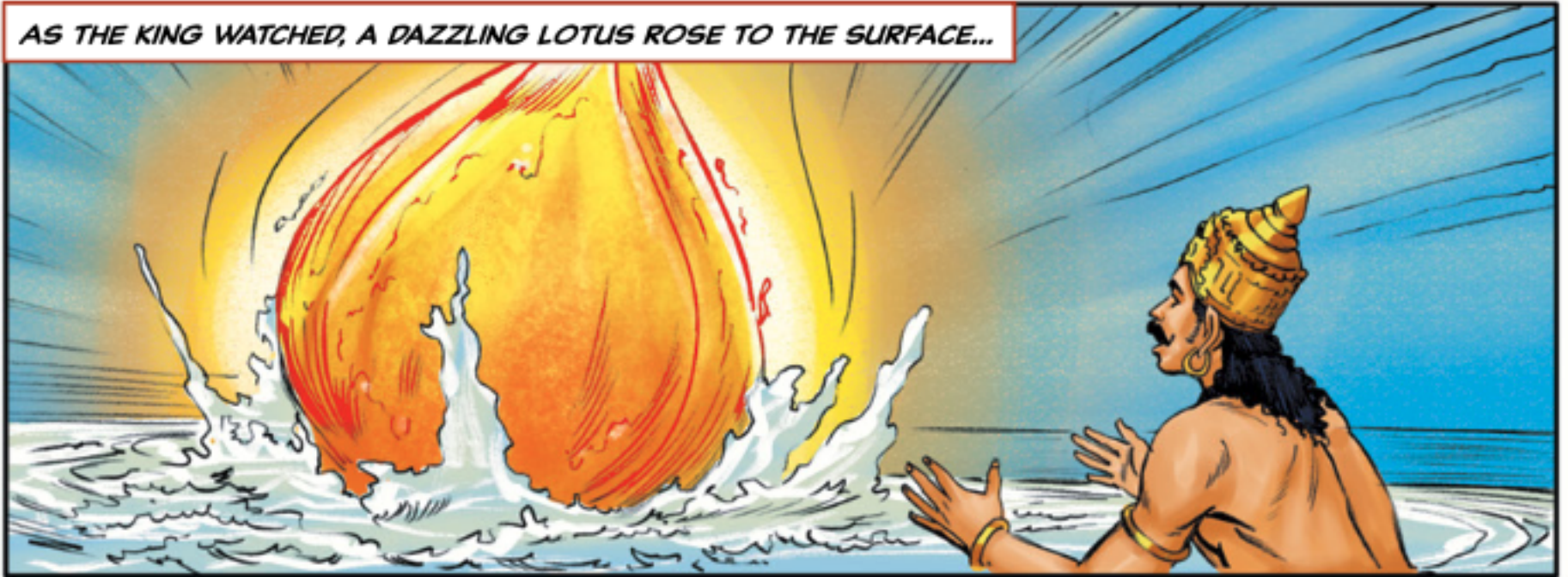


THE KING RUSHED TO THE TEMPLE.





AS THE KING WATCHED, A DAZZLING LOTUS ROSE TO THE SURFACE...



...UNFURLING ITS GOLDEN PETALS TO REVEAL THE GODS.



NAKKEERA, ARISE!



NAKKEERAR'S WOUNDS BEGAN TO HEAL, FLESH STITCHING BACK TOGETHER AND SKIN AS GOOD AS NEW.



NO ART IS ABOVE CRITICISM. BY UPHOLDING THAT, YOU'VE HONoured THE SANCTITY OF WRITING. MAY YOUR COURAGE AND INTEGRITY LIVE ON.

THANK YOU, MY LORD.

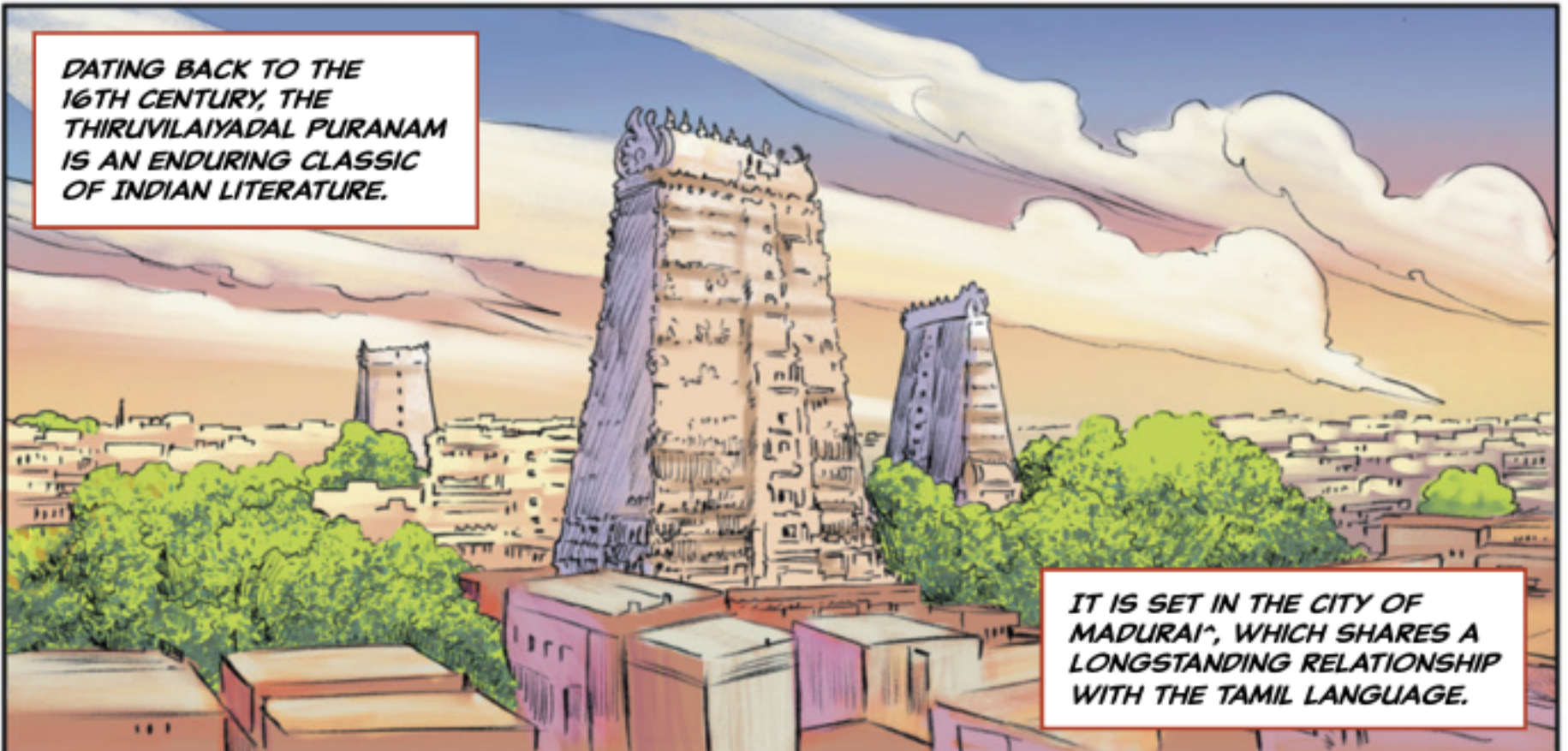


THIS STORY IS FROM THE THIRUVILAIYADAL PURANAM*, A COLLECTION OF 64 TALES ABOUT SHIVA TESTING AND HELPING HIS DEVOTEES.



IT WAS WRITTEN BY PARANJOTHI MUNIVAR, A PALLAVA ARMY GENERAL, WHO LATER DEVOTED HIMSELF TO WORSHIP.

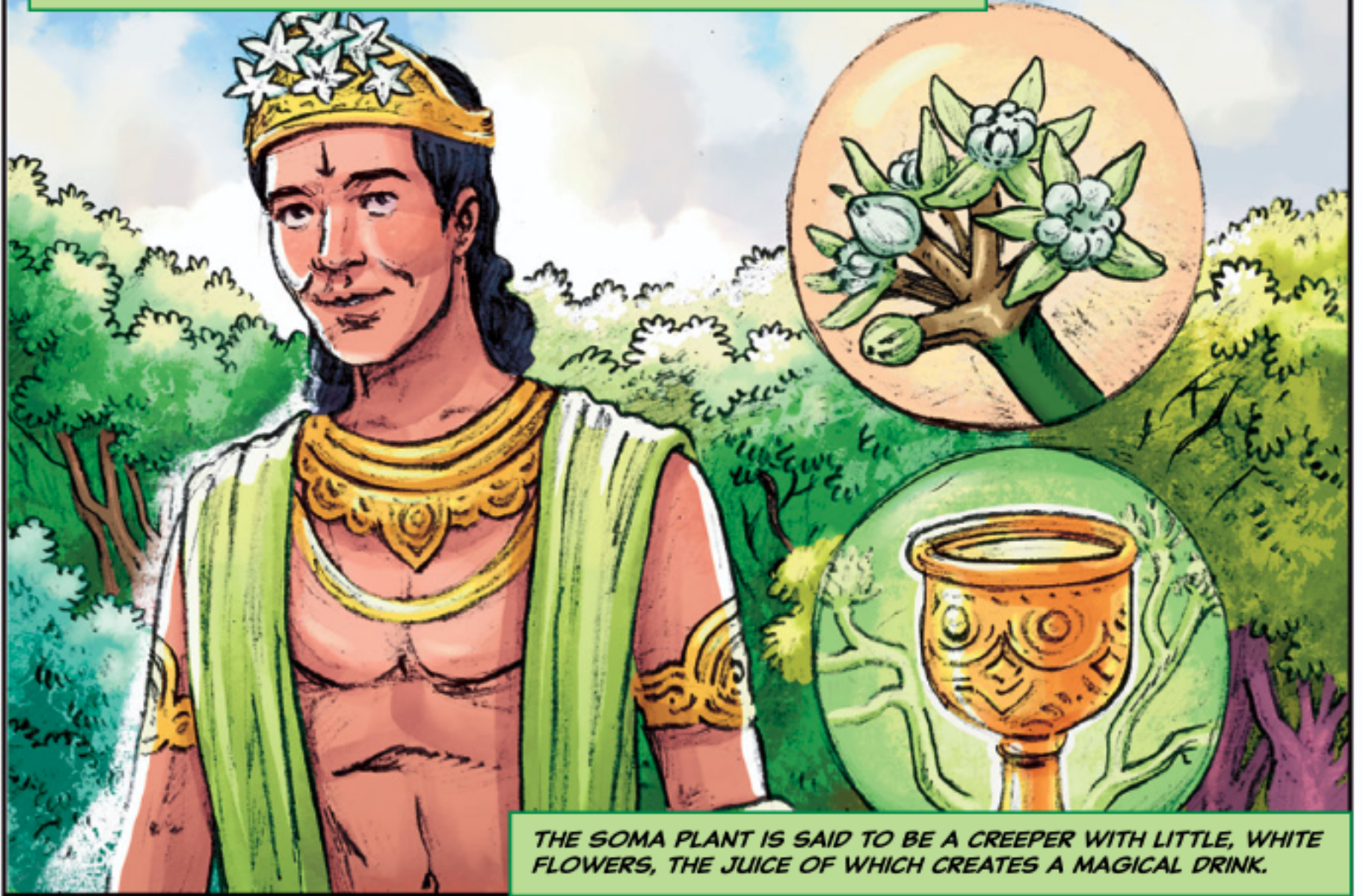
DATING BACK TO THE 16TH CENTURY, THE THIRUVILAIYADAL PURANAM IS AN ENDURING CLASSIC OF INDIAN LITERATURE.



IT IS SET IN THE CITY OF MADURAI*, WHICH SHARES A LONGSTANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TAMIL LANGUAGE.

SOMA

SOMA IS A LITTLE-KNOWN DEITY WHO IS OFTEN MENTIONED IN THE VEDAS. HE IS BELIEVED TO BE THE GOD THAT DWELLS IN THE SOMA PLANT.



THE SOMA PLANT IS SAID TO BE A CREEPER WITH LITTLE, WHITE FLOWERS, THE JUICE OF WHICH CREATES A MAGICAL DRINK.

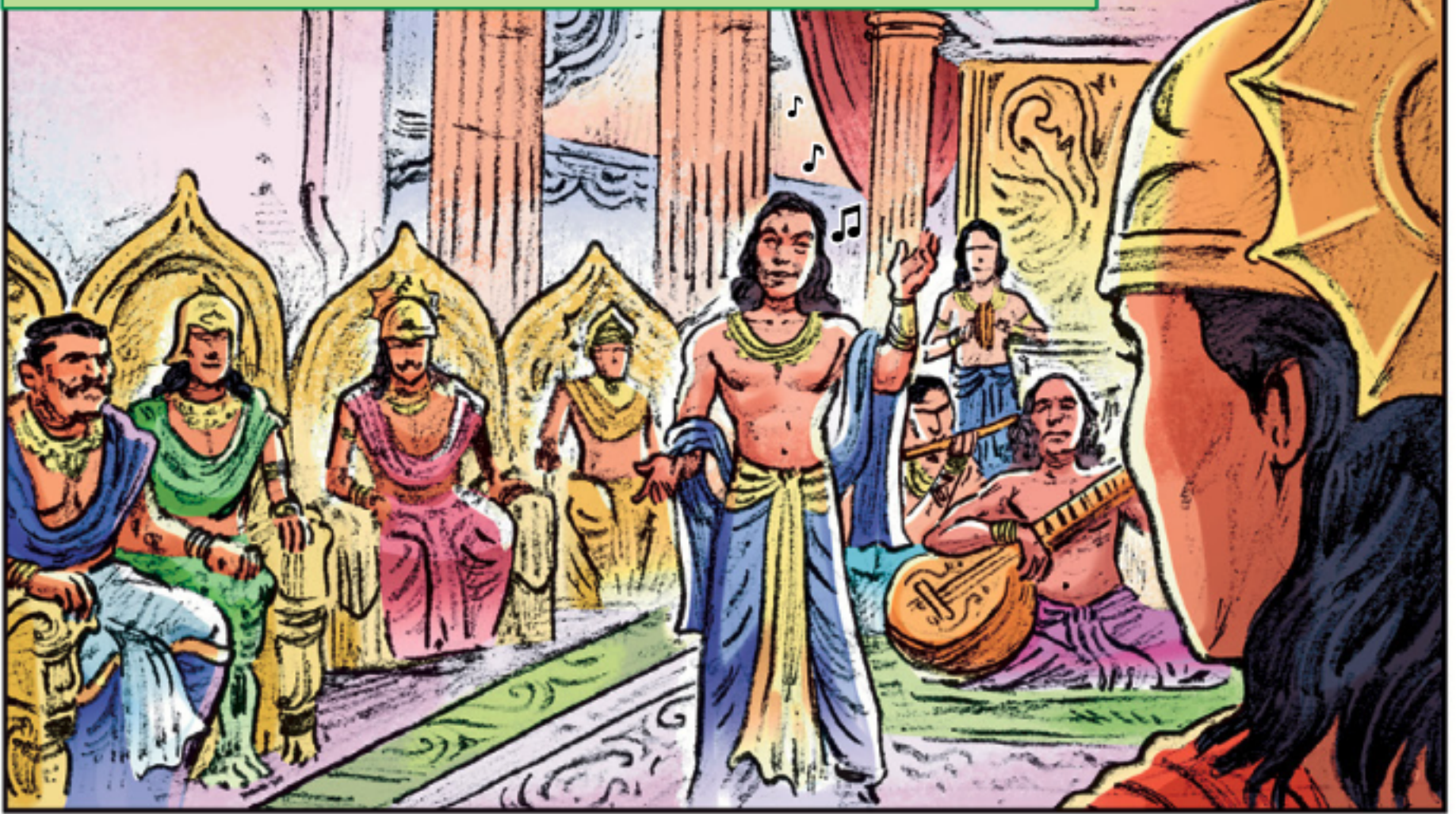
SOMARASA* IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE DIVINE POWERS, WHICH CAN GRANT PROSPERITY TO THE PERSON WHO DRINKS IT. MANY ANCIENT TEXTS REFER TO THE DEVAS, ESPECIALLY INDRA, AS BEING FOND OF SOMARASA.



IN THE LATER VEDIC TIMES, SOMA BECAME SYNONYMOUS WITH CHANDRA, THE MOON GOD. BUT THERE ARE A FEW MYTHS ABOUT SOMA AS THE DEITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE DIVINE PLANT AND DRINK.

*THE DRINK MADE FROM THE JUICE OF THE SOMA PLANT

A LONG TIME AGO, SOMA LIVED IN THE SKY WHILE THE DEVAS DWELT ON EARTH.



ONE DAY —



O INDRA, I HAVE SOME NEWS FOR YOU. I HAVE LEARNT OF A POWERFUL BEING CALLED SOMA, WHO RESIDES AMONG THE STARS.

SOMA? I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM.

SOMA IS THE SPIRIT OF THE SOMA PLANT.

AND WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS PLANT?

THE JUICE OF THE SOMA PLANT HAS MANY MAGICAL PROPERTIES. IT CAN BRING GREAT HEALTH, WEALTH AND PROSPERITY TO THOSE WHO CONSUME IT. FURTHERMORE, IT IS SAID TO TASTE HEAVENLY.





I WISH TO CONSUME THIS MAGICAL DRINK AT ONCE!

FOR THAT, WE MUST FIND A WAY TO BRING SOMA HERE AND CONVINCE HIM TO MAKE SOME SOMARASA FOR US ALL.



DISCUSSIONS BEGAN ABOUT THE BEST WAY TO CONVINCE SOMA. ALL THE GODS HAD THEIR OWN IDEAS.

WE SHOULD OFFER SOMA A SEAT IN LORD INDRA'S COURT. THAT WOULD SURELY TEMPT HIM.

WHY OFFER HIM ANYTHING? WE ARE THE DEVAS AND EVERYONE MUST DO OUR BIDDING.

WHEN THEY COULD NOT AGREE UPON A WAY, THE DEVAS APPROACHED GAYATRI*, THE GODDESS OF WISDOM.

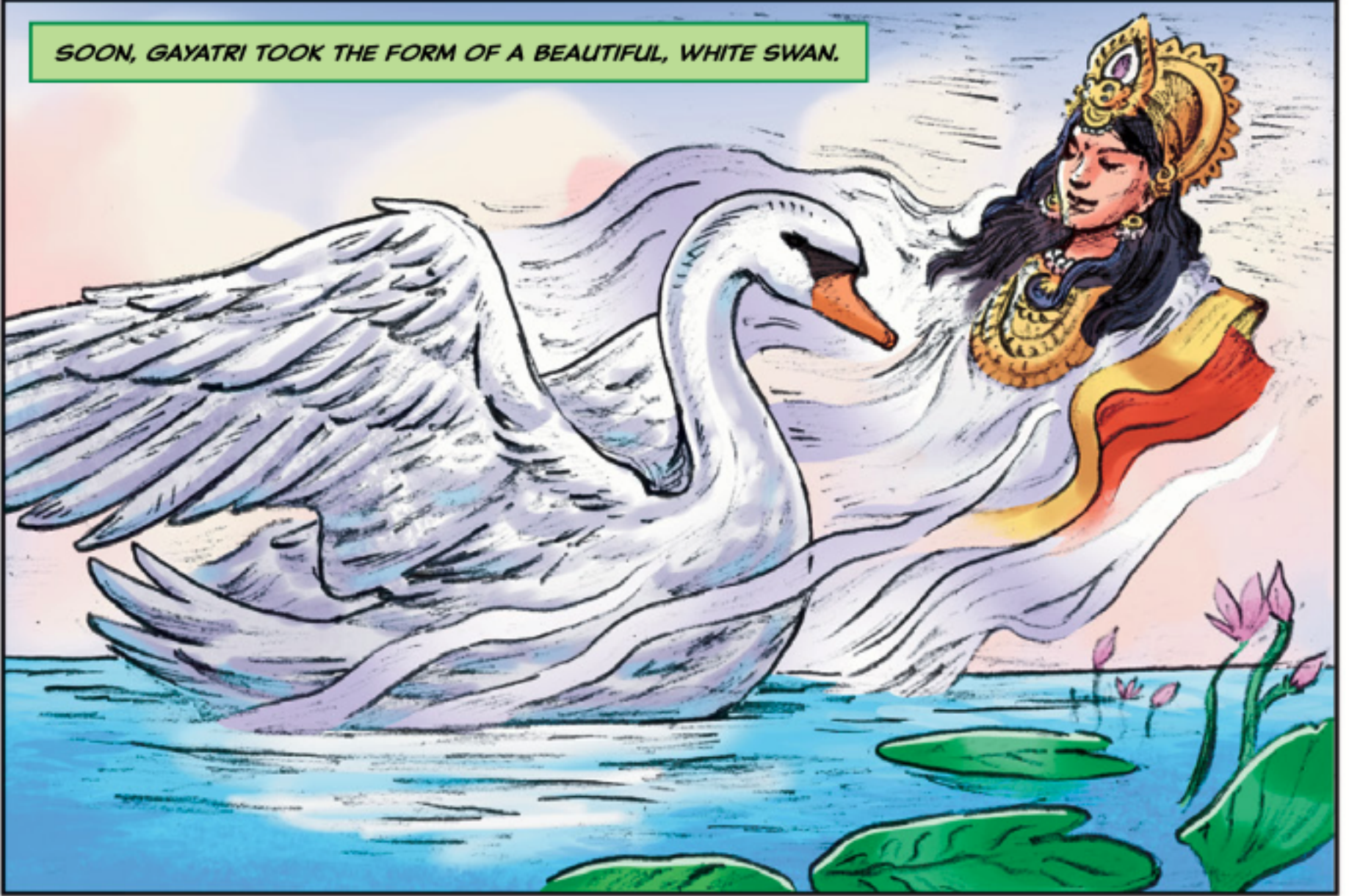


O WISE ONE, PLEASE HELP US OBTAIN SOMA FROM THE SKIES, SO THAT WE MAY PARTAKE THE DIVINE DRINK AND GAIN PROSPERITY.

REST ASSURED, INDRA. I WILL FIND A WAY.

*ANOTHER NAME FOR SARASWATI

SOON, GAYATRI TOOK THE FORM OF A BEAUTIFUL, WHITE SWAN.



SHE SOARED INTO THE STARRY SKY THAT NIGHT AND REACHED THE ABODE OF THE UNSUSPECTING SOMA.



THERE, SHE QUIETLY AND CAREFULLY TOOK THE SLEEPING SOMA AND STARTED CARRYING HIM BACK TO THE DEVAS.



HOWEVER, THE DEVAS WERE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO WANTED SOMA. THE GANDHARVAS* ALSO WISHED TO OBTAIN THE MAGICAL SOMARASA FOR THEMSELVES.



WHEN GAYATRI STOPPED TO REST ON HER JOURNEY —

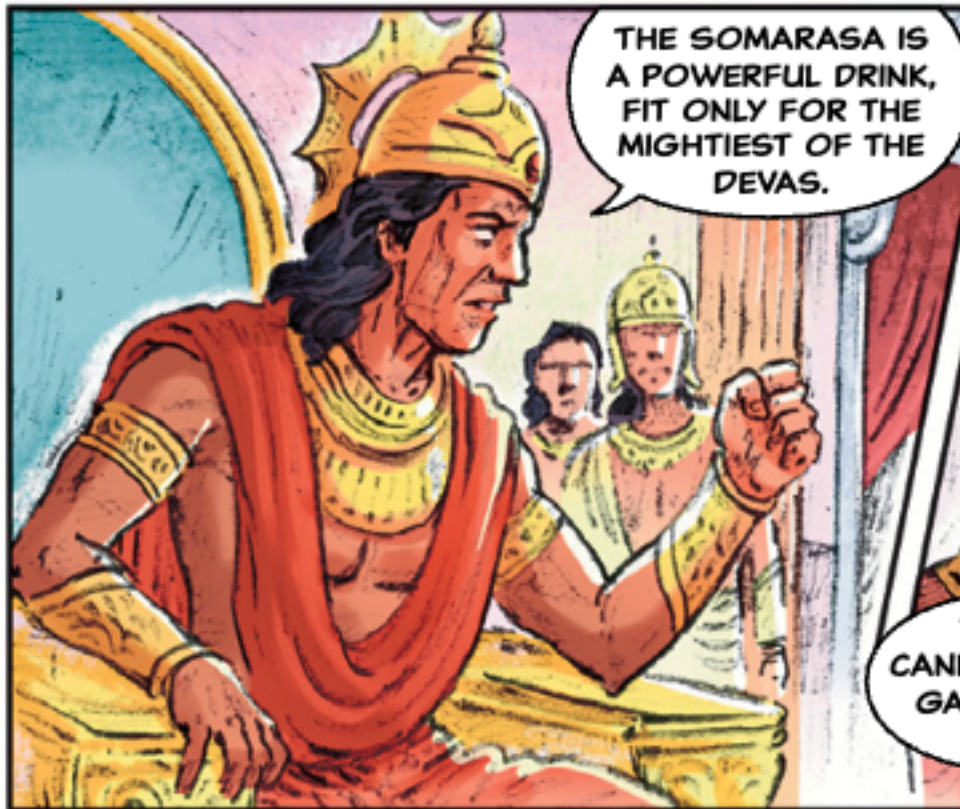


WHEN GAYATRI AWOKE FROM HER SLUMBER —



*CELESTIAL MUSICIANS

THIS NEWS SPREAD TO THE DEVAS —



A SOLUTION SOON EMERGED.



*A CELESTIAL DANCER IN INDRA'S COURT

IT WAS DECIDED THAT THEY WOULD ASK VAC*, THE GODDESS OF SPEECH, TO GO.



*A FORM OF SARASWATI

THE WISE GODDESS WAS TRUE TO HER WORD AND SOON SOMA WAS IN INDRA'S COURT.





HOWEVER, AS INDRA STEPPED FORWARD TO PARTAKE OF THE DIVINE DRINK —



SENSING THAT THE CONFLICT WAS ABOUT TO GET WORSE, VAC STEPPED IN.

MY LORDS, THERE IS NO REASON TO FIGHT OVER THIS. THERE IS A SIMPLE SOLUTION.

TELL US, WISE ONE. WHO GETS THE FIRST SIP?

WHY DON'T WE HOLD A CONTEST? WHOEVER WINS IT, CAN HAVE IT.

AND WHAT WOULD THE CONTEST BE?

A RACE!

ALL THE DEVAS AGREED TO THE IDEA OF ORGANISING A RACE. THEY WERE ALL CONFIDENT THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO BEAT THE OTHERS.

I AM THE KING OF GODS, I'LL WIN THIS EASILY.

I AM THE MIGHTY RULER OF THE OCEANS, THIS RACE IS CHILD'S PLAY.

WHO CAN RUN FASTER THAN THE WIND?

THE RACE BEGAN.



INDRA AND VAYU* EMERGED AS THE FASTEST CONTENDERS, LEAVING THE OTHERS BEHIND.

VAYU IS FASTER. IT WON'T LOOK GOOD FOR ME TO LOSE TO ONE OF MY SUBJECTS.



THINKING QUICKLY, INDRA CAME UP WITH A PLAN.

VAYU, WAIT A MINUTE.

THIS IS A RACE, YOU CAN'T TRICK ME INTO STOPPING!

IT'S NOT A TRICK. I HAVE AN IDEA THAT BENEFITS US BOTH.

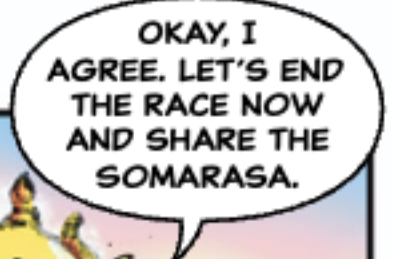
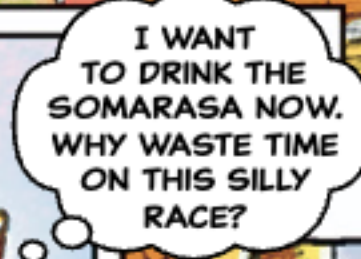


VAYU WAS INTRIGUED.

WELL, WHAT IS IT?



*GOD OF THE WINDS



THE TWO VICTORS OF THE RACE RETURNED JUBILANT.



VARUNA

VARUNA IS ONE OF THE MAJOR DEITIES WHO APPEARS IN THE VEDAS. HE IS SAID TO BE THE LORD OF ALL OCEANS AND WATER BODIES.

HE IS ALSO THE UPHOLDER OF RTA, THE COSMIC LAW, AND IS KNOWN AS RTASYA GOPA OR RTAVAN.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE SUN ITSELF IS HIS EYE, THROUGH WHICH HE VIEWS EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS IN THE UNIVERSE. HE CATCHES WRONGDOERS WITH HIS PASHA, A NOOSE, AND PUNISHES THEM FOR THEIR DEEDS.

A STORY ABOUT VARUNA AND RAVANA, THE KING OF LANKA, APPEARS IN THE PADMA PURANA. RAVANA WAS A GREAT DEVOTEE OF SHIVA. ONCE, WHEN HE WAS IN THE HIMALAYAS —

I WILL CARRY THIS GLORIOUS SHIVALINGA BACK TO LANKA WITH ME. I WILL WORSHIP IT DAY AND NIGHT, TO BECOME THE GREATEST DEVOTEE OF MAHADEVA!

AS RAVANA APPROACHED THE LINGA, SHIVA APPEARED.

RAVANA, I SEE YOU WISH TO REMOVE THE LINGA FROM ITS PLACE.

MY LORD! THANK YOU FOR BLESSING ME WITH YOUR PRESENCE. I WISH TO CARRY THIS BACK TO LANKA AND WORSHIP IT THERE.

GO AHEAD, THEN. BUT REMEMBER, YOU MUST CARRY IT IN YOUR ARMS ALL THE WAY. WHEREVER YOU SET IT DOWN ON THE EARTH, THAT IS WHERE IT MUST STAY FOREVER.



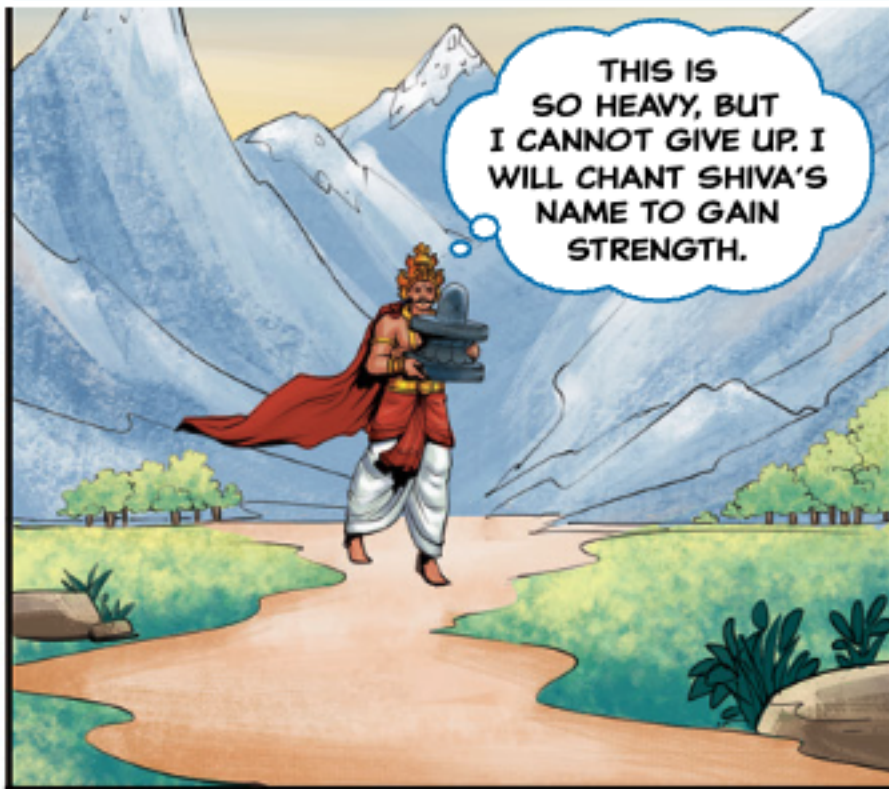
RAVANA LIFTED THE SHIVALINGA AND STARTED TOWARDS LANKA.



THE DEVAS WERE WATCHING FROM THEIR HOME IN THE HEAVENS.



DESPITE INDRA'S CLAIMS, RAVANA PROGRESSED STEADILY TOWARDS HIS DESTINATION...



THIS IS
SO HEAVY, BUT
I CANNOT GIVE UP. I
WILL CHANT SHIVA'S
NAME TO GAIN
STRENGTH.

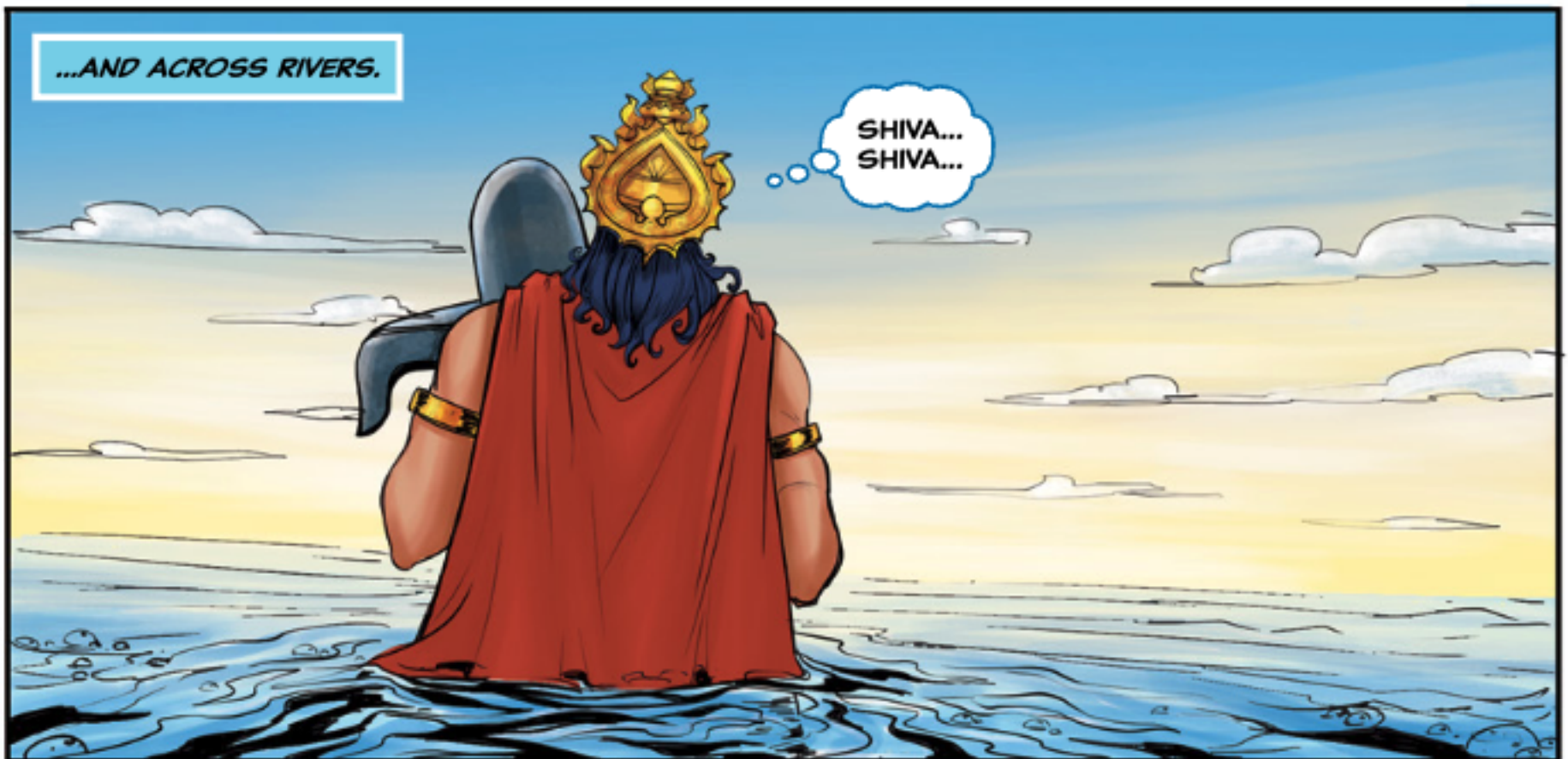


...THROUGH FORESTS...



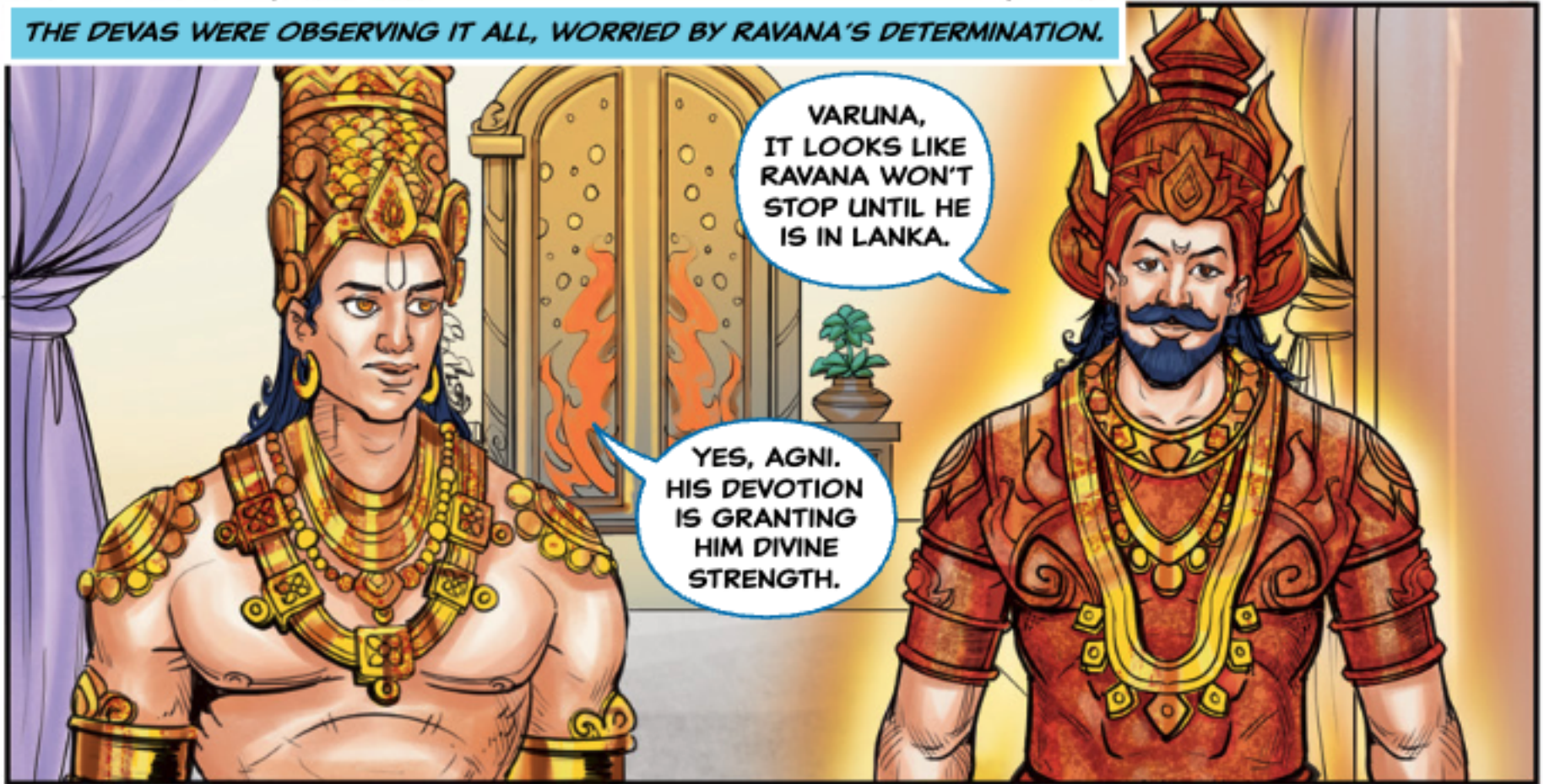
SHIVA...
SHIVA...

...AND ACROSS RIVERS.

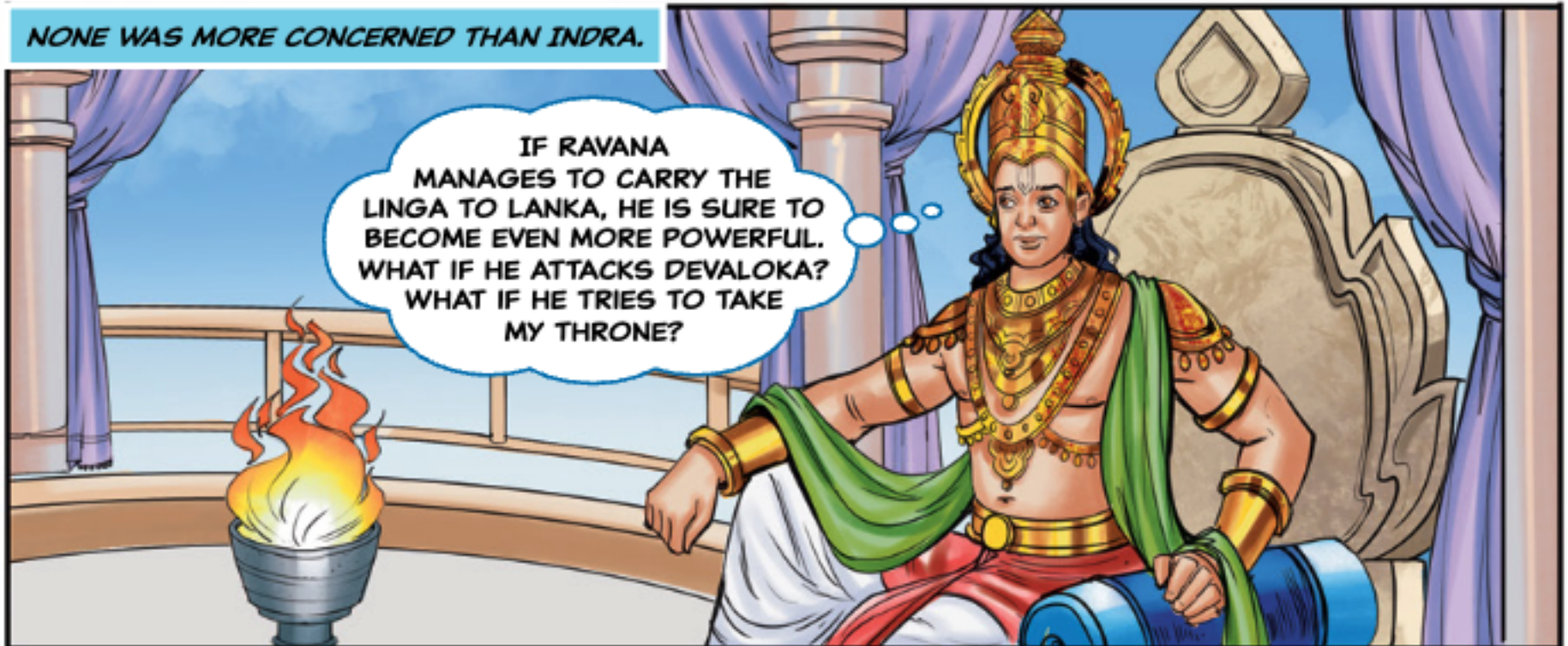


SHIVA...
SHIVA...

THE DEVAS WERE OBSERVING IT ALL, WORRIED BY RAVANA'S DETERMINATION.



NONE WAS MORE CONCERNED THAN INDRA.

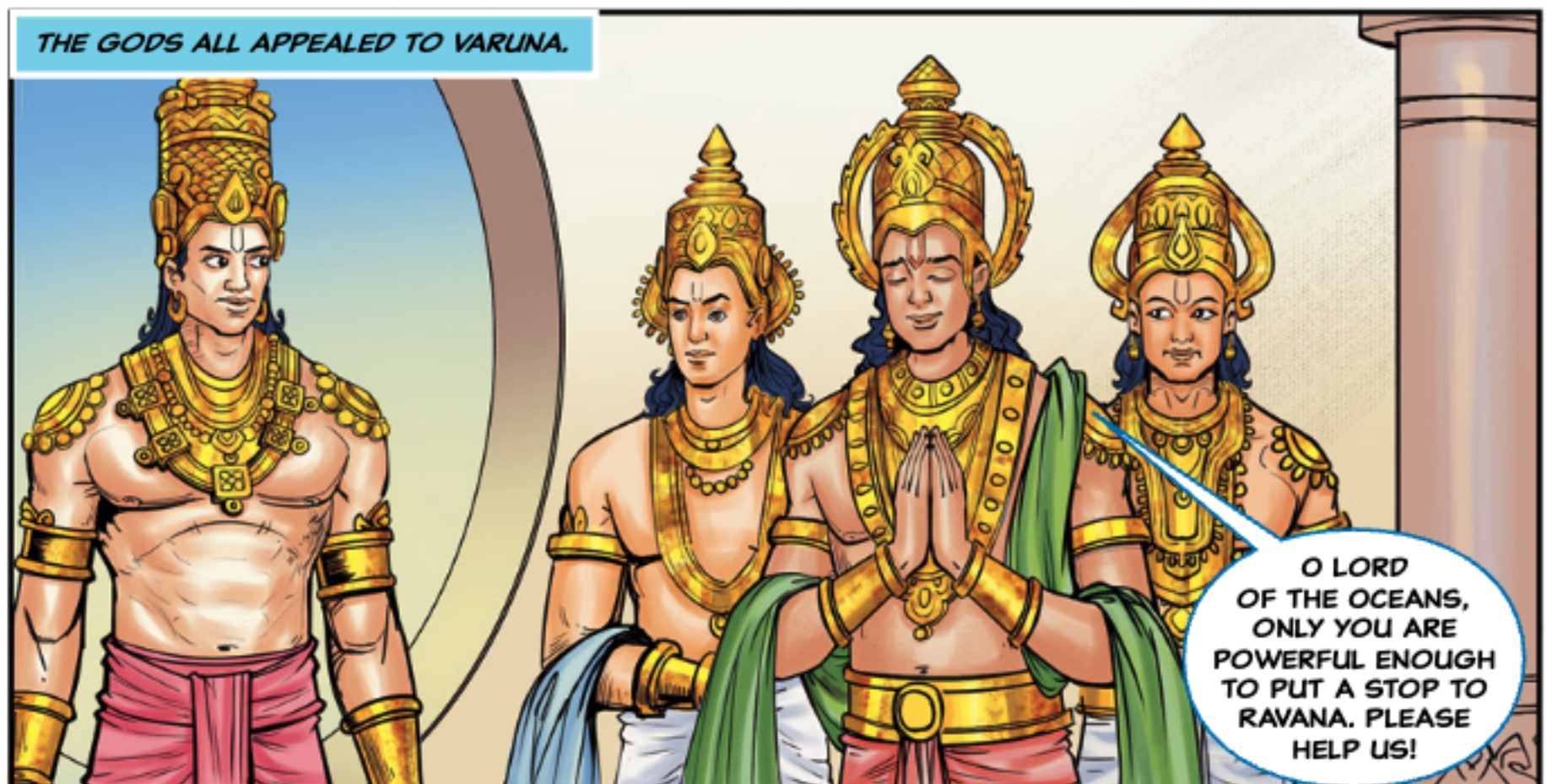


SOON —



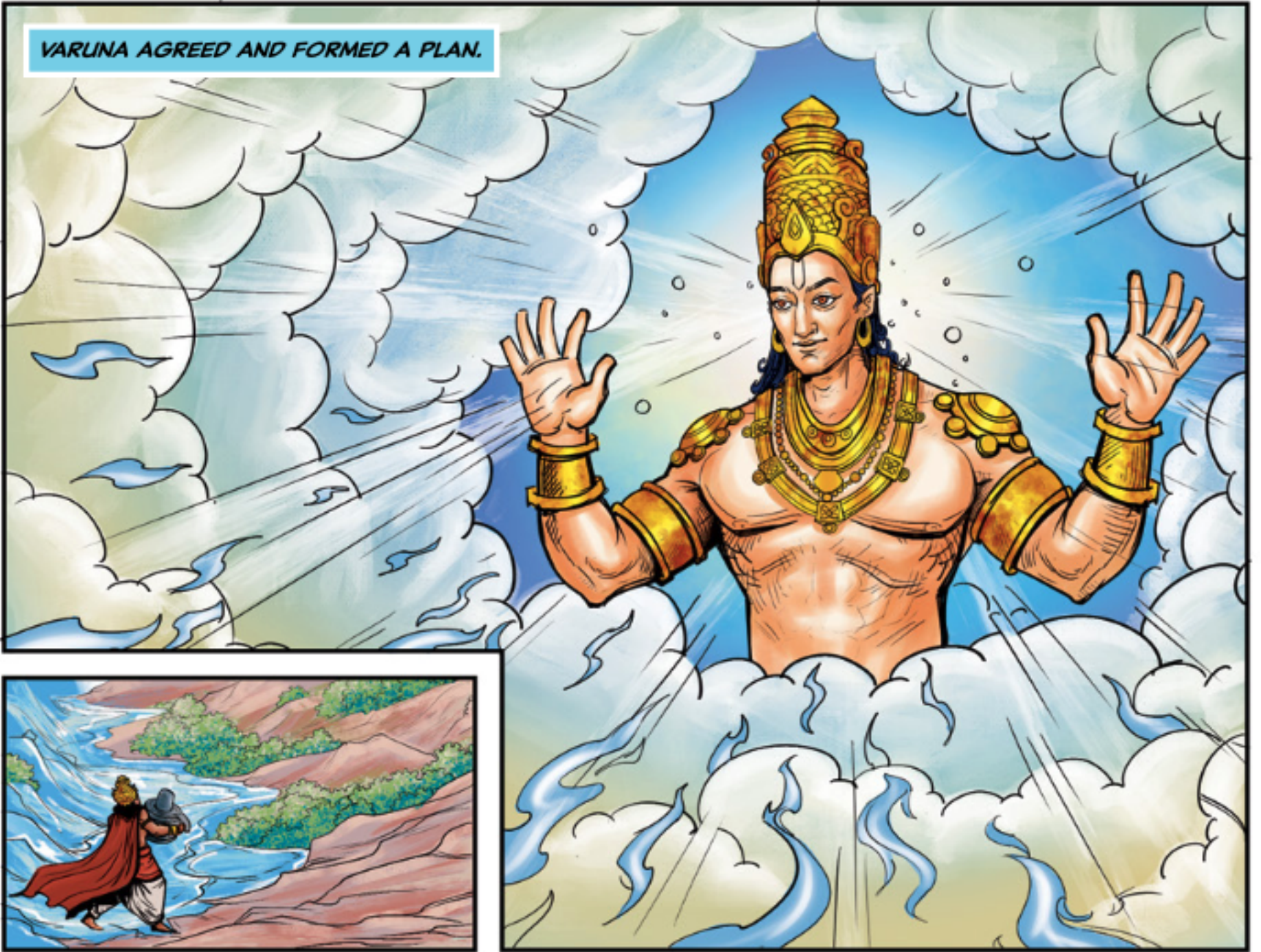


THE GODS ALL APPEALED TO VARUNA.



* A DAUGHTER OF DAKSHA, ADITI WAS MARRIED TO SAGE KASHYAPA AND BECAME THE MOTHER OF 12 GODS, CALLED THE ADITYAS.

VARUNA AGREED AND FORMED A PLAN.



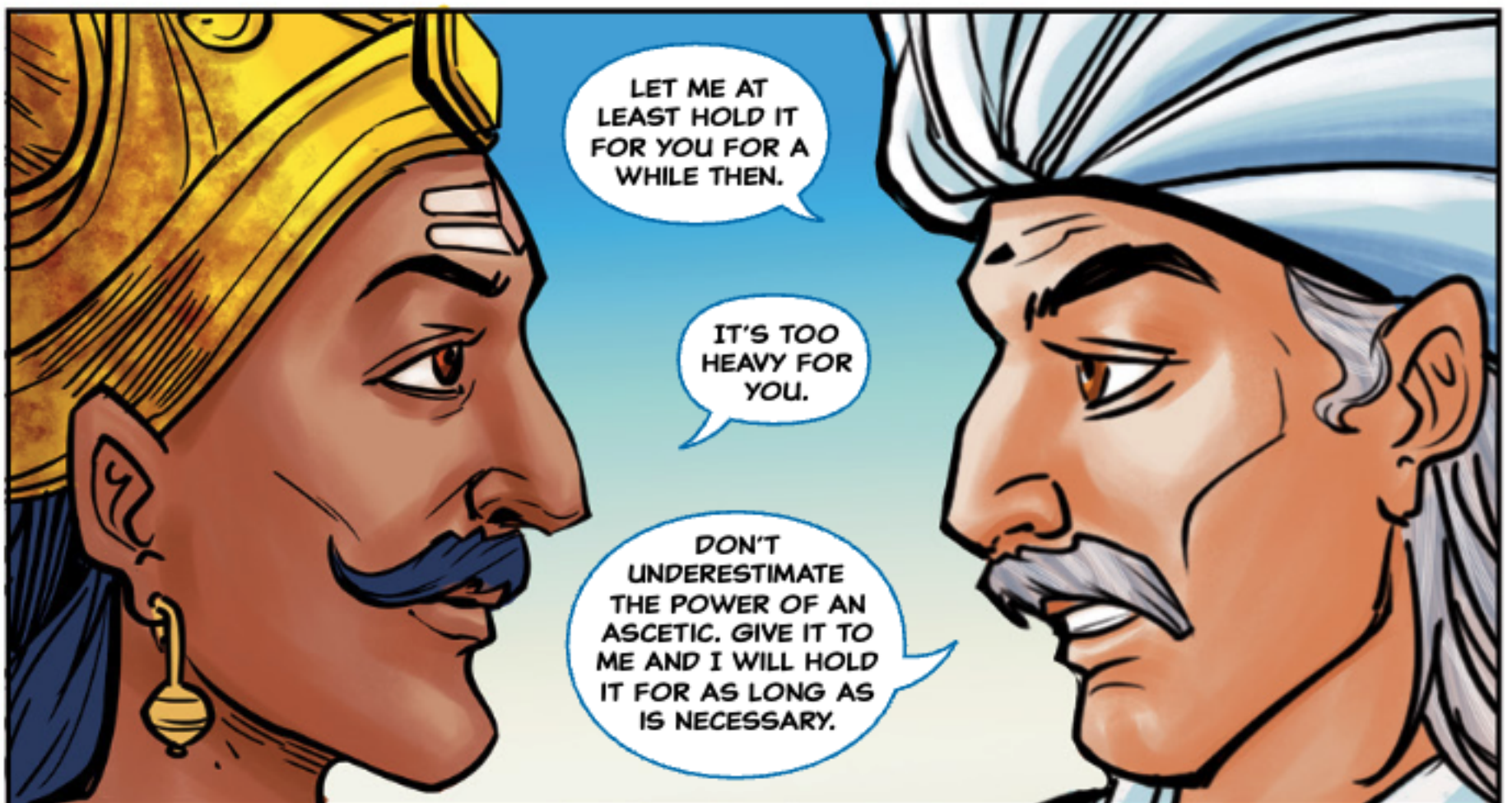
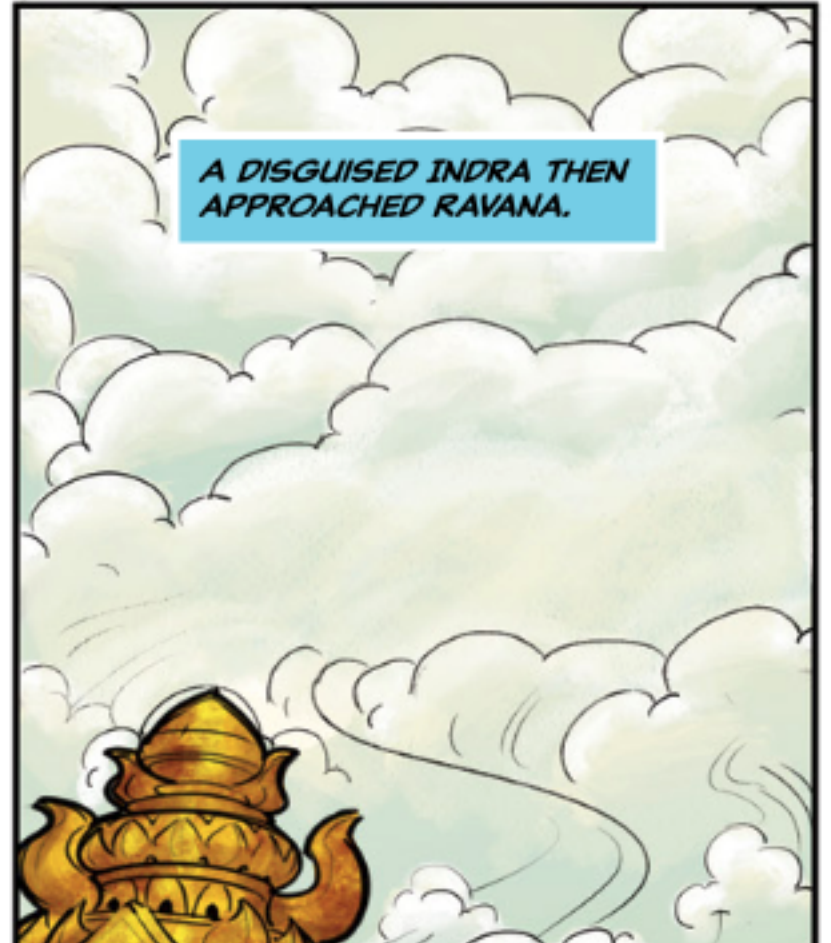
HE APPROACHED RAVANA AND ENTERED HIS BODY.



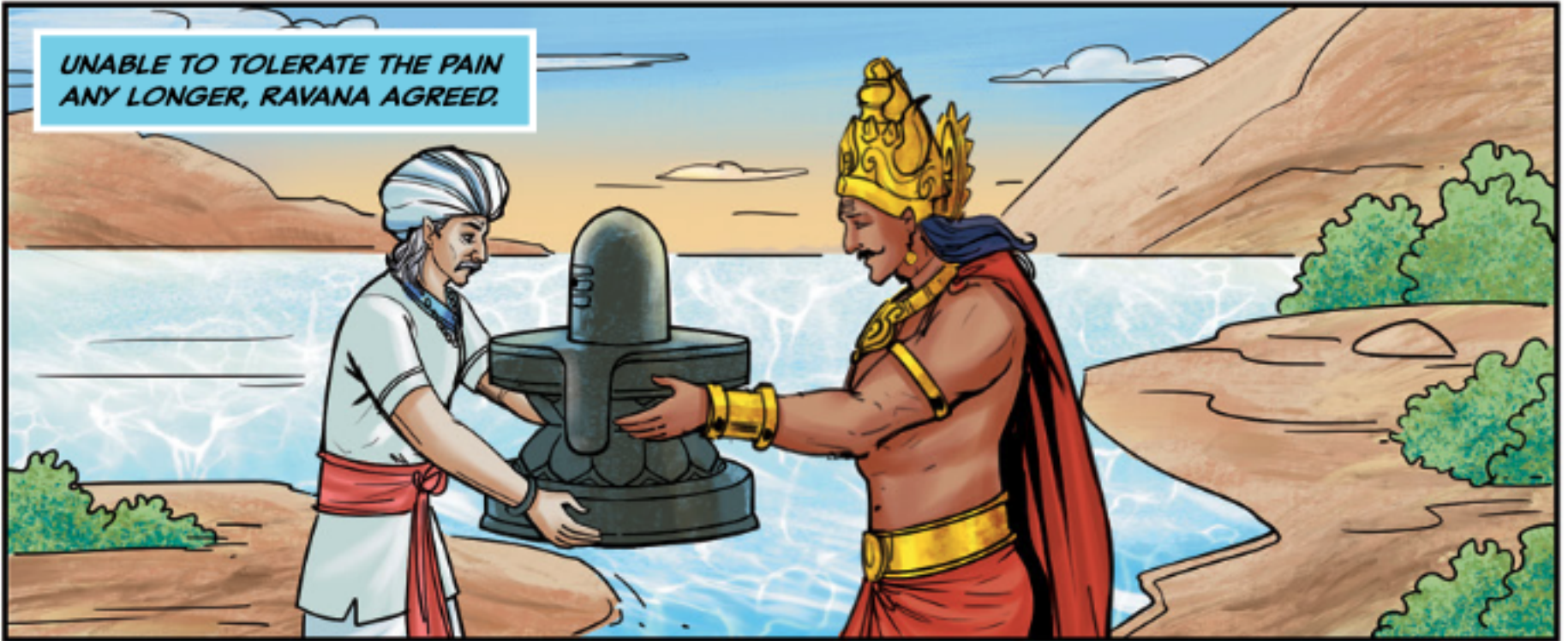
IMMEDIATELY, RAVANA BEGAN EXPERIENCING UNBEARABLE PAIN ALL OVER HIS BODY.

**AAAA!
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
TO ME?**

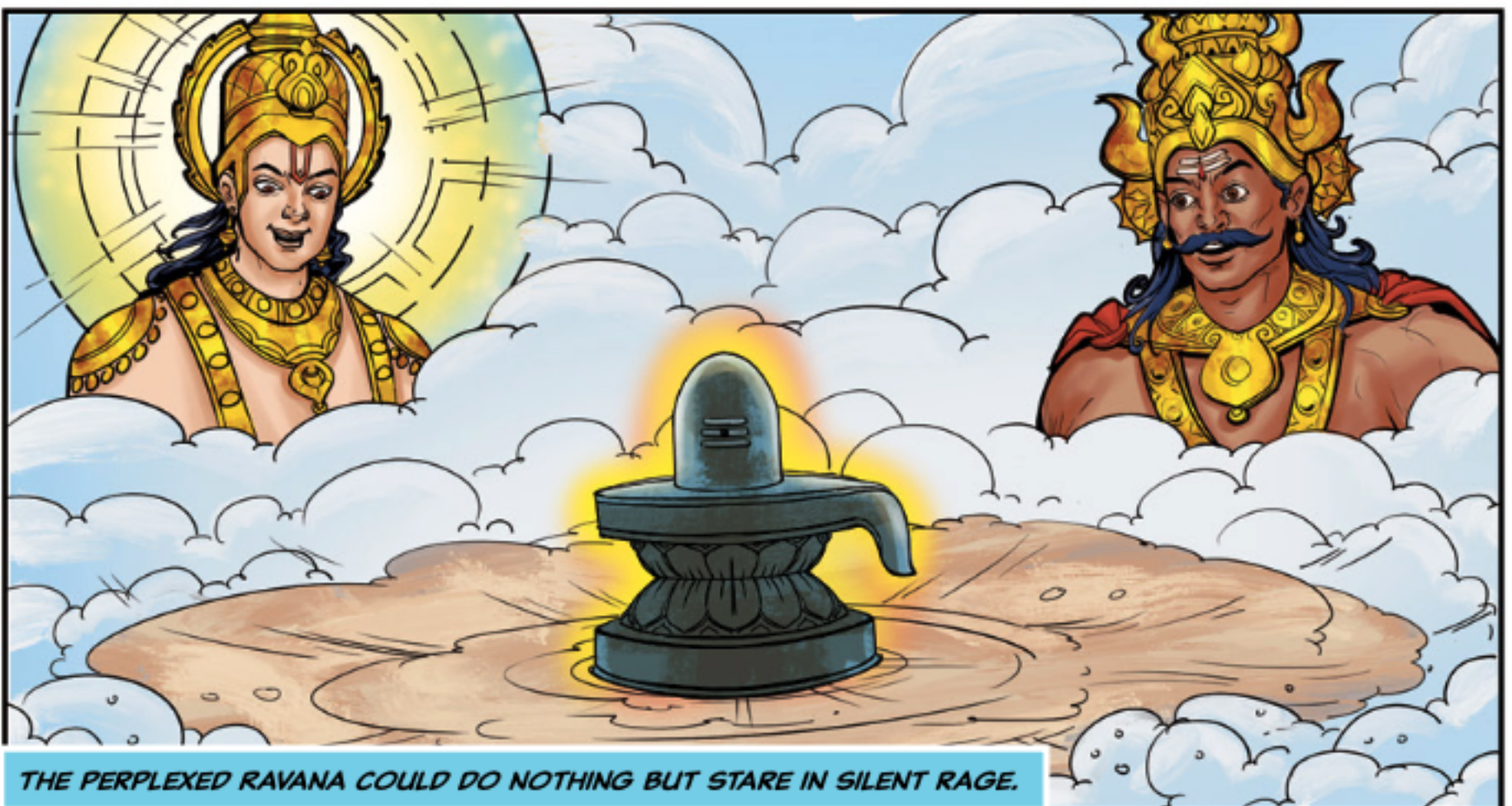




UNABLE TO TOLERATE THE PAIN ANY LONGER, RAVANA AGREED.



HOWEVER, AS SOON AS HE HANDED OVER THE LINGA —



THE PERPLEXED RAVANA COULD DO NOTHING BUT STARE IN SILENT RAGE.

THE SHIVALINGA BEGAN TO SINK INTO THE EARTH ON THE SPOT THAT INDRA HAD PLACED IT.

IT IS SAID THAT THE TIP OF THE LINGA IS STILL VISIBLE IN BIRBHUM*.

VARUNA'S MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, HE LEFT RAVANA'S BODY.

THE RIVER KHURSU IS SAID TO HAVE ORIGINATED FROM VARUNA, AS HE LEFT RAVANA'S BODY.

JHULELAL

An Incarnation of Varuna

The Sindhi community worships Varuna in his incarnation as Jhulelal, also known as Uderolal or Zinda Pir. He is their patron saint, associated with rivers, water and marine life, and is therefore also depicted as being seated on the Pala fish. Jhulelal is celebrated during the Sindhi festival of Cheti Chand, which usually falls in March or April.

The story of Jhulelal is a fascinating tale which ultimately talks of communal harmony. It is believed that in 10th century C.E., a tyrannical Turkish ruler known as Mirk Shah or Makrab Khan was reigning over the province of Thatta, in present day Sindh, Pakistan. He started to force Hindus in the region to convert to Islam. The people then prayed to their lifeline, the River Indus. They fasted and appealed to the river for forty days, after which a voice emerged from the river. The voice told the people that Varuna would be born among them and become their saviour.

Soon, a couple — Ratanchand and Devaki Lohana — had a child they named Uderolal (The One Who Came from the Waters). A number of miracles took place during the boy's childhood, which convinced his parents and the community that he was extraordinary. When he was but a baby, his parents looked in his open mouth and saw the mighty Indus. Similarly, it is said that his cradle would rock itself and put him to sleep. Thus, he began to be called Jhulelal or 'Lord of the Swing'.

As news of this miraculous child reached Mirk Shah, he sent his soldiers to take the child captive. When the soldiers reached, Jhulelal transformed from a child to an old saintly man with a white beard, within a matter of seconds. Soon, Jhulelal and Mirk Shah came face to face. The saint preached a message of unity and harmony to the king. He is believed to have said, "He whom you call Allah, and my people call Krishna, are but one and the same!"

Script: Kayva Gokhale
Design: Tithee Dixit

Mirk Shah, however, was bent on putting an end to Jhulelal. During his trial, it is said that the court flooded with water and the roof suddenly caught fire. Awed and terrified by this spectacle, Mirk Shah was reformed and begged for mercy. Immediately, the water receded, the fire died out and Jhulelal is said to have been swallowed by the earth. After this incident, the Hindus built a temple to mark the holy spot, while the Muslims built a dargah right next to it. This rare phenomenon symbolises everything that Jhulelal preached to the people, namely unity, communal harmony and love for all.



IT IS BELIEVED THAT ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD ARE MADE OUT OF FIVE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS: WATER, FIRE, WIND, SPACE AND EARTH.



VAYU

VAYU IS THE GOD OF WIND. HE IS OFTEN DEPICTED WITH FOUR ARMS AND RIDING ON HIS VAHANA, THE ANTELOPE. HE HAS THE BLUE COMPLEXION OF THE SKY.

IN VAYU'S UPPER HANDS, HE CARRIES A PENNANT AND CLUB. HIS LOWER TWO HANDS ARE HELD IN ABHAYA MUDRA* AND VARADA MUDRA^.

AIR IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL LIVING BEINGS TO SURVIVE. VAYU IS BELIEVED TO LOOK AFTER NATURE'S CIRCULATION OF AIR.

HE IS ALSO KNOWN AS PRANA, THE LIFE BREATH OF THE WORLD.

JUST LIKE WIND IS EVERYWHERE, SO IS VAYU. HE TRAVELS WITH THE WIND, AND WATCHES OVER THOSE WHO SEEK HIS HELP.



THIS IS THE STORY OF A VANARA NAMED ANJANA, WHO WAS A DEVOTEE OF VAYU. SHE LIVED WITH HER HUSBAND, KESARI, DEEP IN THE FORESTS OF KISHKINDHA.

LOOK AT THE FRUITS I FOUND TODAY!

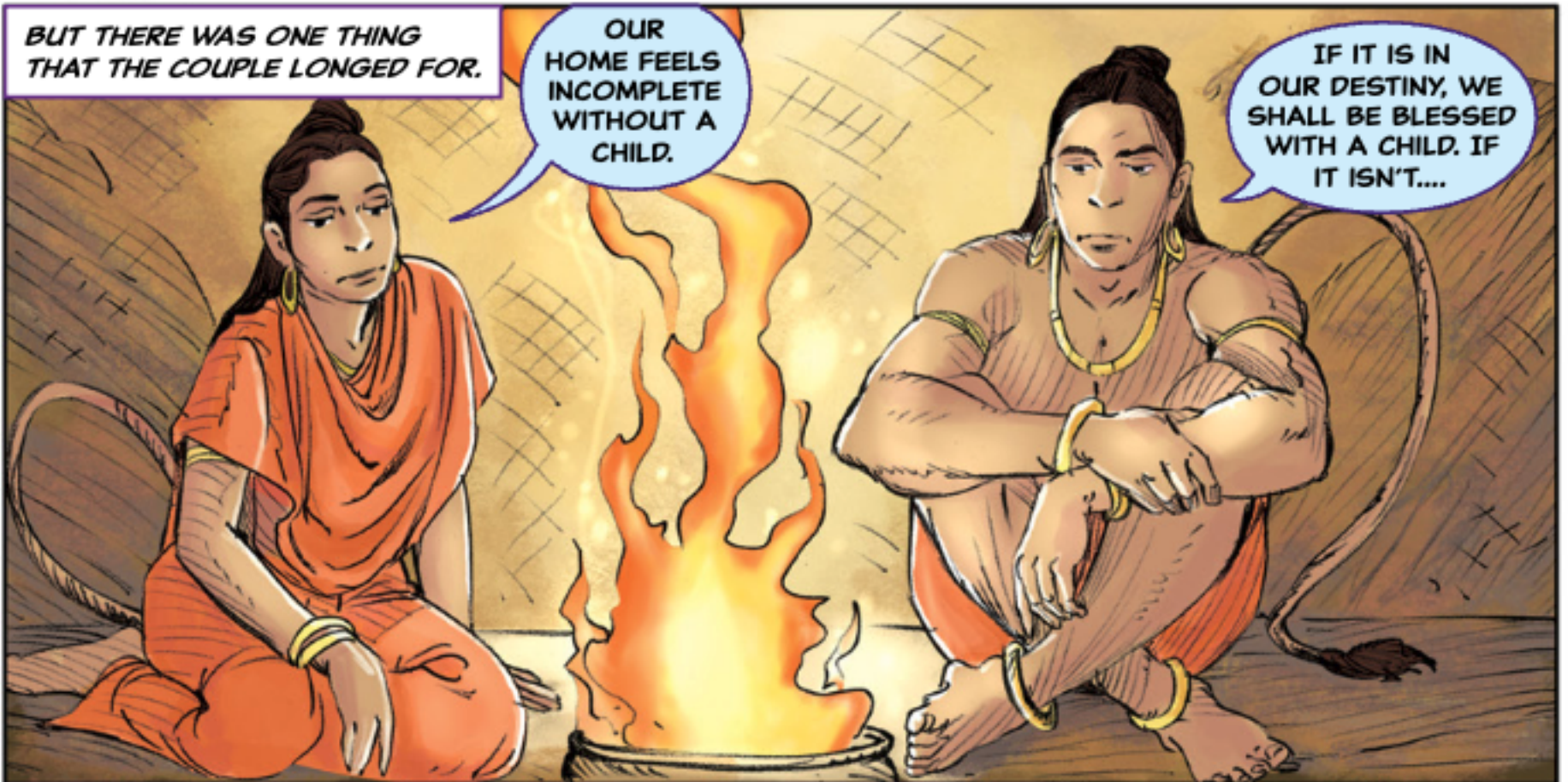


THE JUNGLE WOULD PROVIDE EVERYTHING THEY NEEDED.

BUT THERE WAS ONE THING THAT THE COUPLE LONGED FOR.

OUR HOME FEELS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT A CHILD.

IF IT IS IN OUR DESTINY, WE SHALL BE BLESSED WITH A CHILD. IF IT ISN'T....



AN UNHAPPY ANJANA DECIDED TO TAKE DESTINY INTO HER OWN HANDS.

OM VAYU DEVAYA NAMAH!

O VAYU, PLEASE BLESS ME WITH A CHILD.



VAYU HEARD ANJANA'S PRAYER. BUT -

I CANNOT JUST GIVE HER A CHILD. HOW DO I HELP HER?

AS VAYU FOCUSED ALL HIS ENERGY TO FIND AN ANSWER, THE WIND CARRIED A FARAWAY VOICE TO HIS EARS.

MY QUEENS, CONSUME THIS KHEER*. WHOSOEVER EATS IT WILL BE BLESSED WITH CHILDREN.

THE VOICE CAME FROM DASHRATHA'S COURT. THIS WAS THE KHEER THAT DASHRATHA HAD GOT THROUGH PERFORMING THE PUTRAKAMESHTI YAGNA*.

THIS WAS THE KHEER THAT LED TO THE BIRTH OF RAMA, LAKSHMANA, BHARATA AND SHATRUGHNA.

VAYU SENT AN EAGLE TO STEAL SOME OF THE KHEER.



*A PUDDING MADE OF RICE AND MILK

*A SACRIFICE CONDUCTED TO BE BLESSED WITH SONS

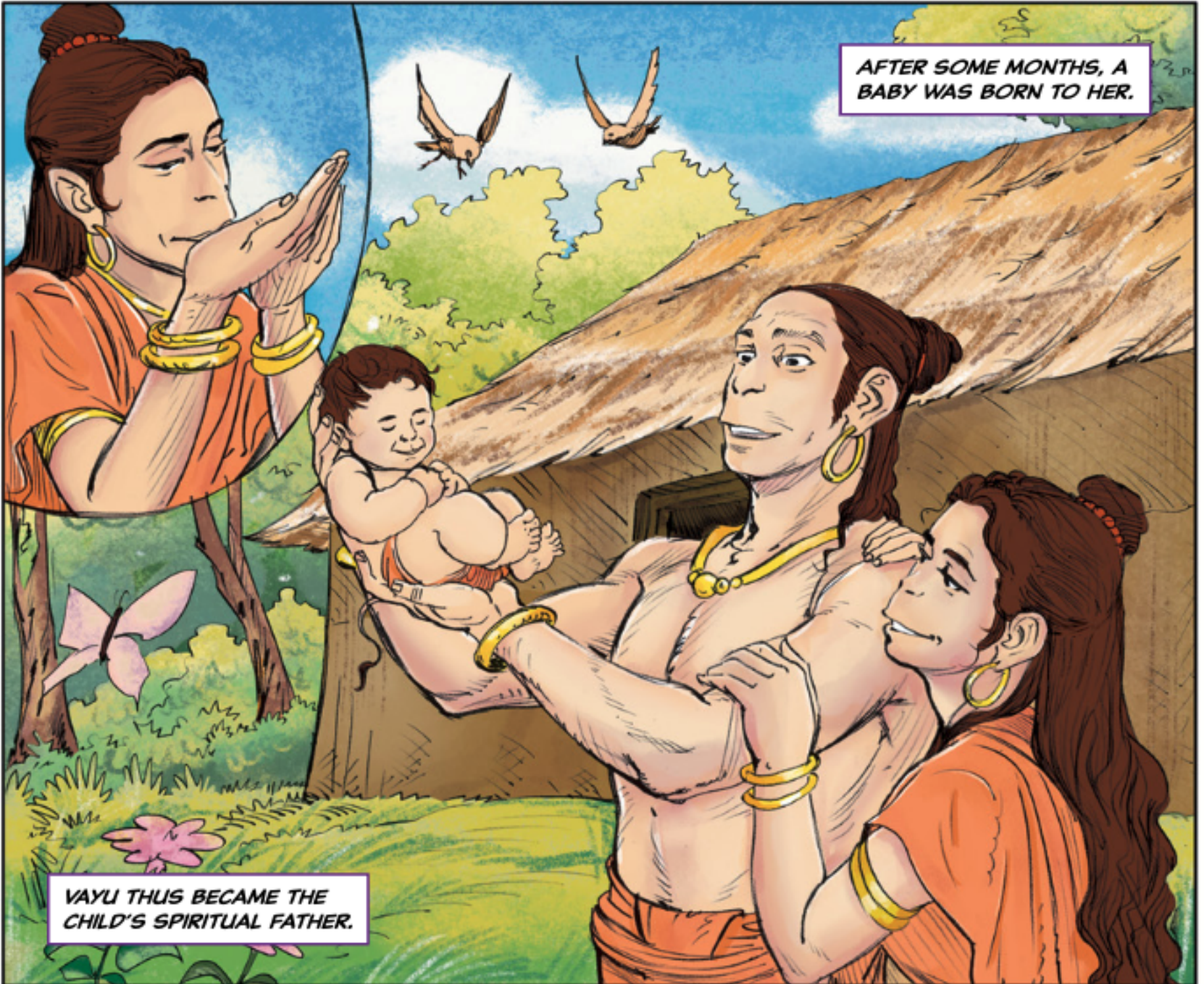
THE EAGLE CARRIED THE KHEER IN ITS MOUTH TOWARDS THE FOREST WHERE ANJANA LIVED...



...AND DROPPED THE KHEER INTO HER EXTENDED HANDS.

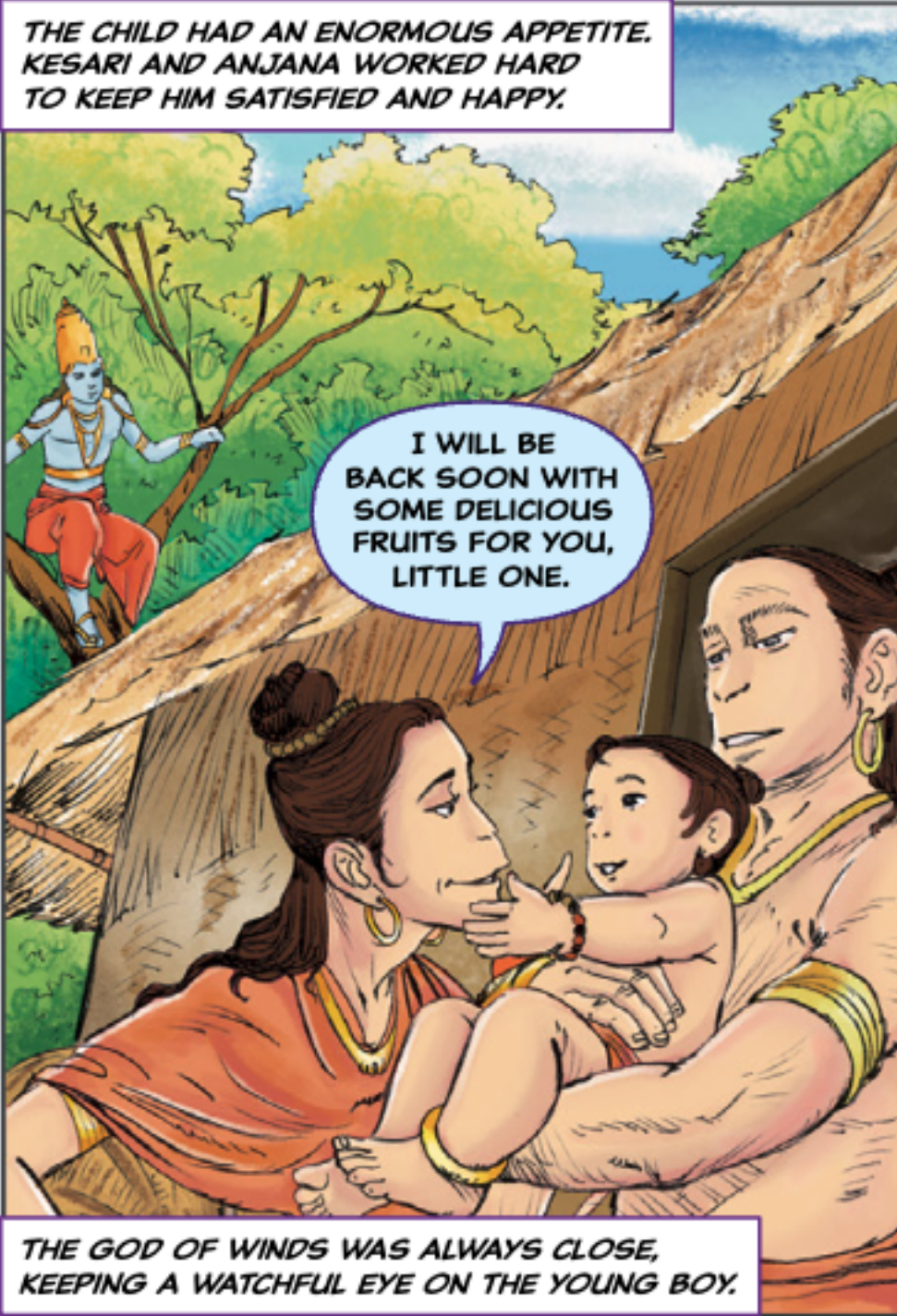


AFTER SOME MONTHS, A BABY WAS BORN TO HER.



VAYU THUS BECAME THE CHILD'S SPIRITUAL FATHER.

THE CHILD HAD AN ENORMOUS APPETITE. KESARI AND ANJANA WORKED HARD TO KEEP HIM SATISFIED AND HAPPY.



I WILL BE BACK SOON WITH SOME DELICIOUS FRUITS FOR YOU, LITTLE ONE.

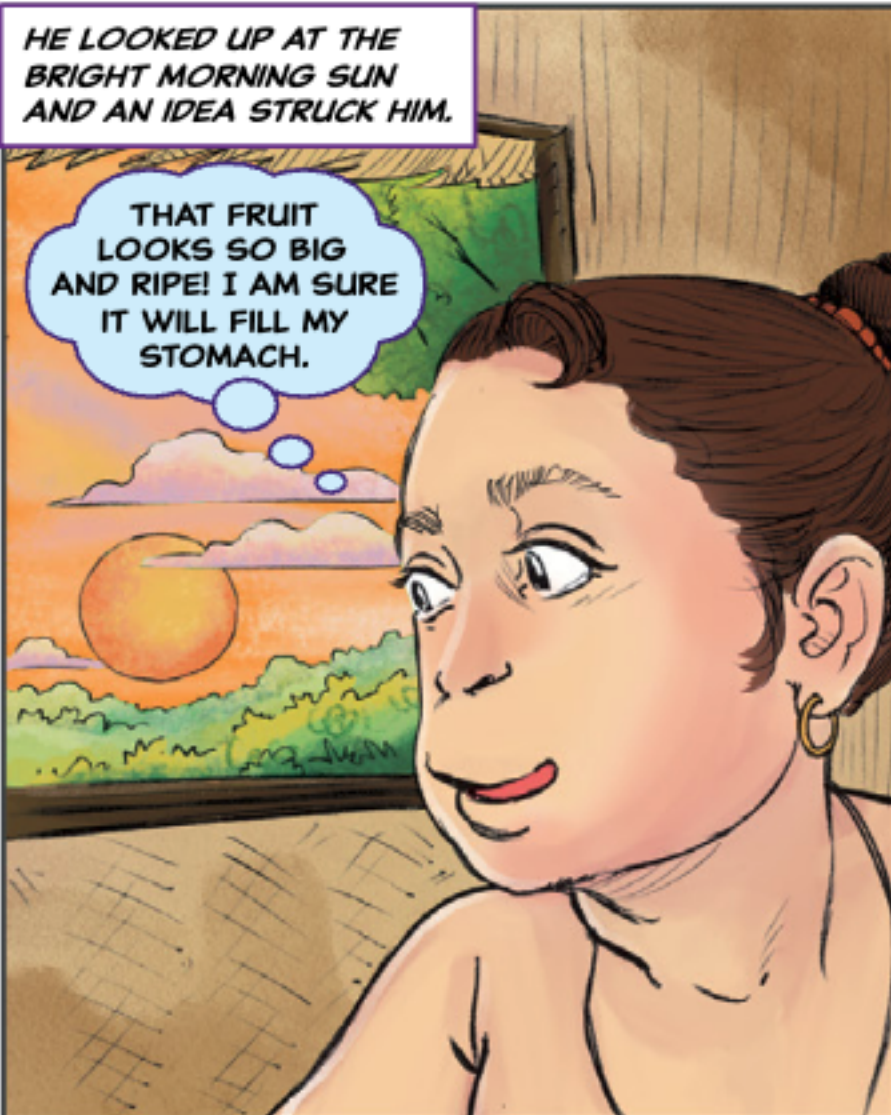
THE GOD OF WINDS WAS ALWAYS CLOSE, KEEPING A WATCHFUL EYE ON THE YOUNG BOY.

AS THE CHILD GREW, HE BECAME VERY POWERFUL AND HIS APPETITE, INSATIABLE. ONE DAY WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE AWAY, HE GOT VERY HUNGRY.



I HAVE FINISHED ALL THE FOOD AT HOME. BUT I AM STILL SO HUNGRY....

HE LOOKED UP AT THE BRIGHT MORNING SUN AND AN IDEA STRUCK HIM.

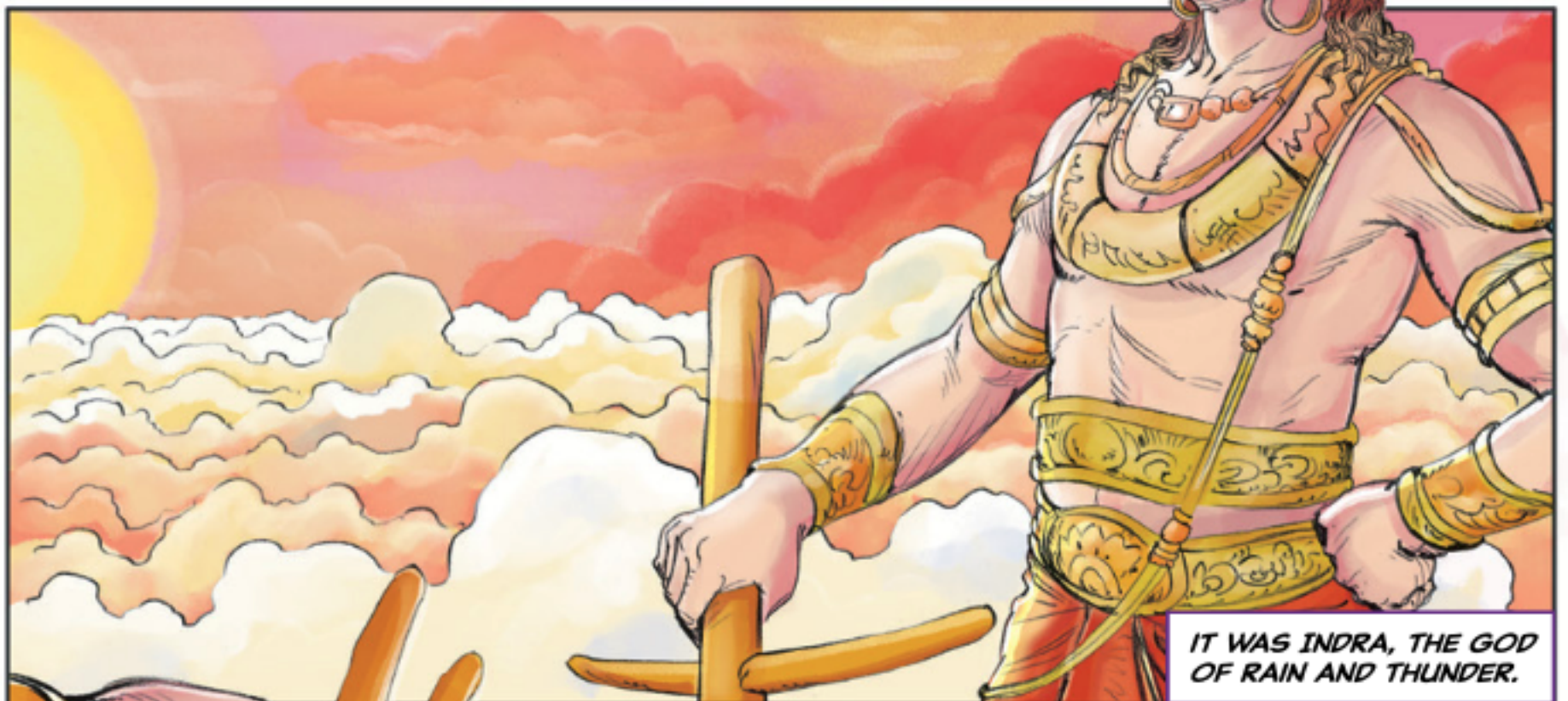
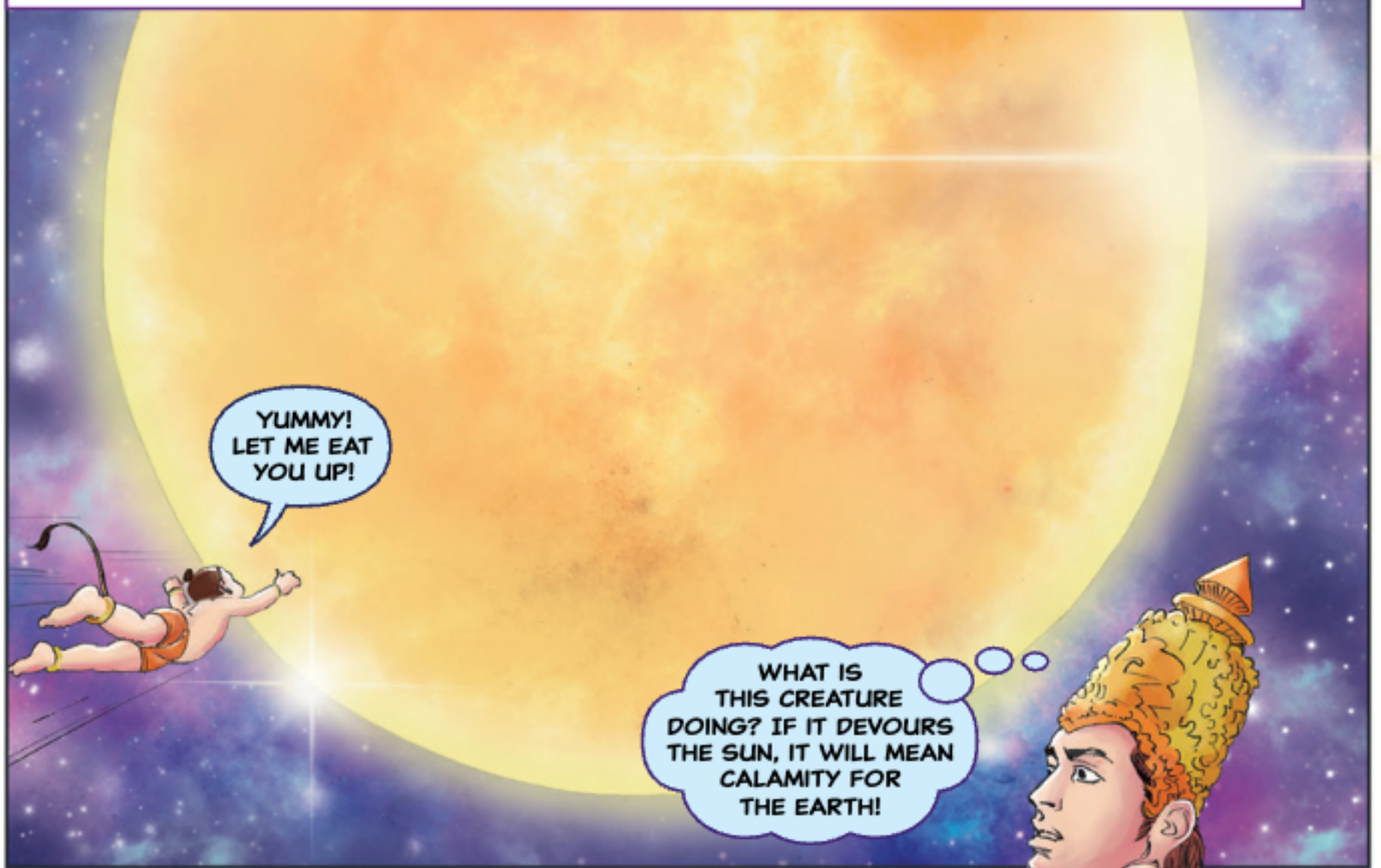


THAT FRUIT LOOKS SO BIG AND RIPE! I AM SURE IT WILL FILL MY STOMACH.

THE CHILD LEAPT UP INTO THE SKY TO EAT THE SUN.



AS THE CHILD GOT CLOSER TO THE SUN, IT GOT BIGGER AND BIGGER, BUT THAT DID NOT STOP HIM.



THE THUNDERBOLT HIT
THE CHILD ON HIS HANU*...

...AND HE STARTED FALLING TOWARDS THE EARTH.

AAAAA!

VAYU HEARD THE
CHILD'S SCREAM AND
RUSHED TO SAVE HIM.

VAYU WAS FILLED WITH SORROW. HIS
SORROW WAS SO IMMENSE THAT ALL
THE AIR IN THE WORLD STOPPED MOVING.

BUT HE REACHED A
LITTLE TOO LATE.

HE DECIDED TO LEAVE EARTH AND
TAKE THE CHILD TO THE UNDERWORLD.

BUT WITHOUT VAYU, THE CIRCULATION OF LIFE-GIVING AIR STOPPED. PEOPLE, PLANTS AND ANIMALS STARTED SUFFOCATING.



THE WORRIED GODS, WHO WITNESSED THIS, REACHED OUT TO INDRA.

WE MUST DO SOMETHING. IF VAYU DOESN'T RETURN SOON, ALL LIFE ON EARTH WILL END.

INDRA! YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS. I URGE YOU TO GO TO PATALA LOKA* AND CONVINCE VAYU TO COME BACK.



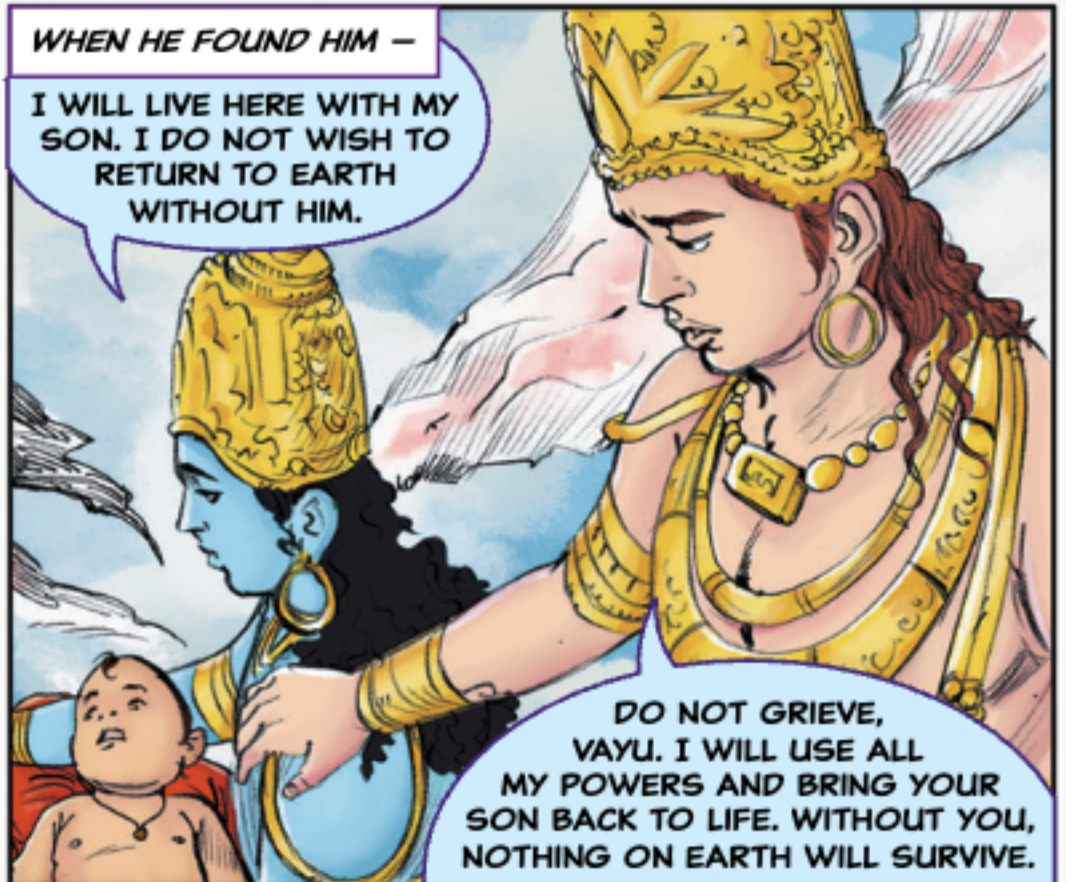
INDRA WENT IN SEARCH OF VAYU.



WHEN HE FOUND HIM –

I WILL LIVE HERE WITH MY SON. I DO NOT WISH TO RETURN TO EARTH WITHOUT HIM.

DO NOT GRIEVE, VAYU. I WILL USE ALL MY POWERS AND BRING YOUR SON BACK TO LIFE. WITHOUT YOU, NOTHING ON EARTH WILL SURVIVE.



*THE UNDERWORLD

INDRA MANIFESTED ALL HIS DIVINE POWERS AND USED THEM TO RESURRECT VAYU'S SON.



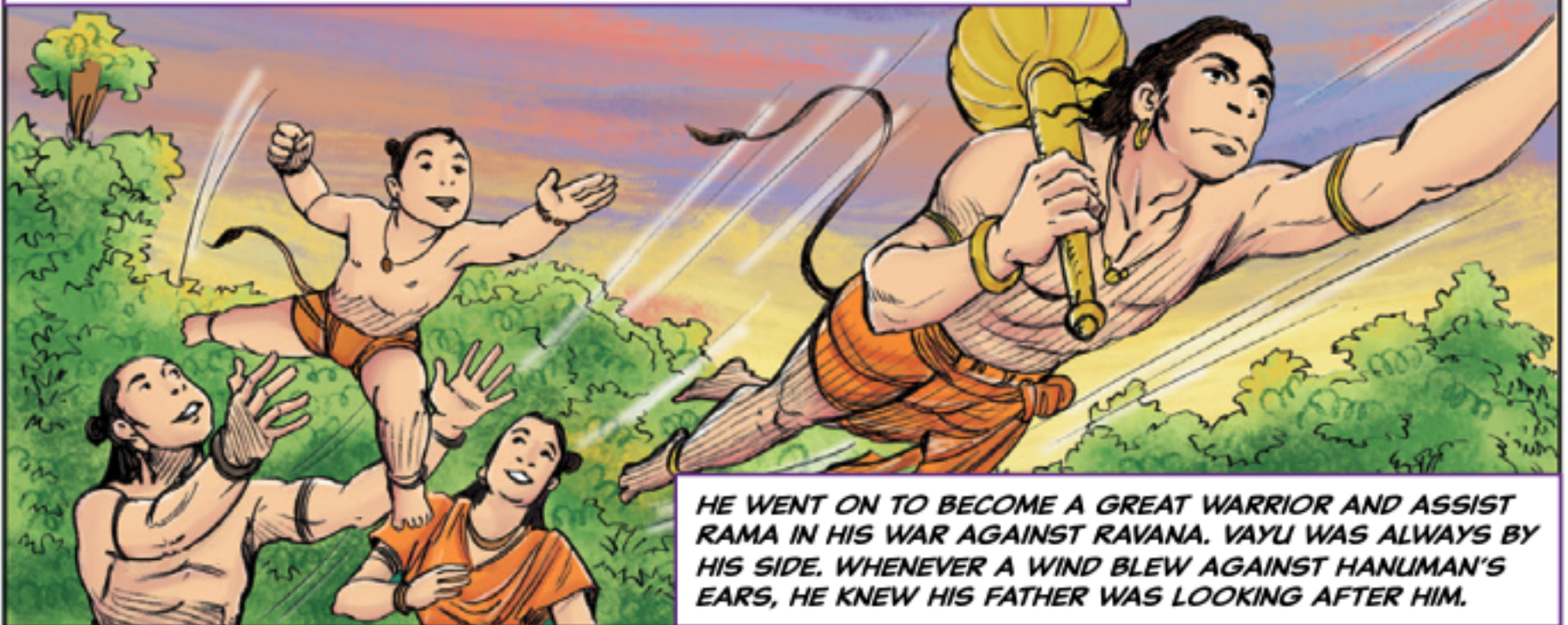
WHEN THE CHILD OPENED HIS EYES, VAYU WAS FILLED WITH JOY.



AND SO, VAYU RETURNED TO EARTH, MUCH TO THE RELIEF OF ALL LIVING BEINGS.



THE CHILD CAME TO BE KNOWN AS HANUMAN, ONE WHOSE CHIN IS BRUISED.



YAMA

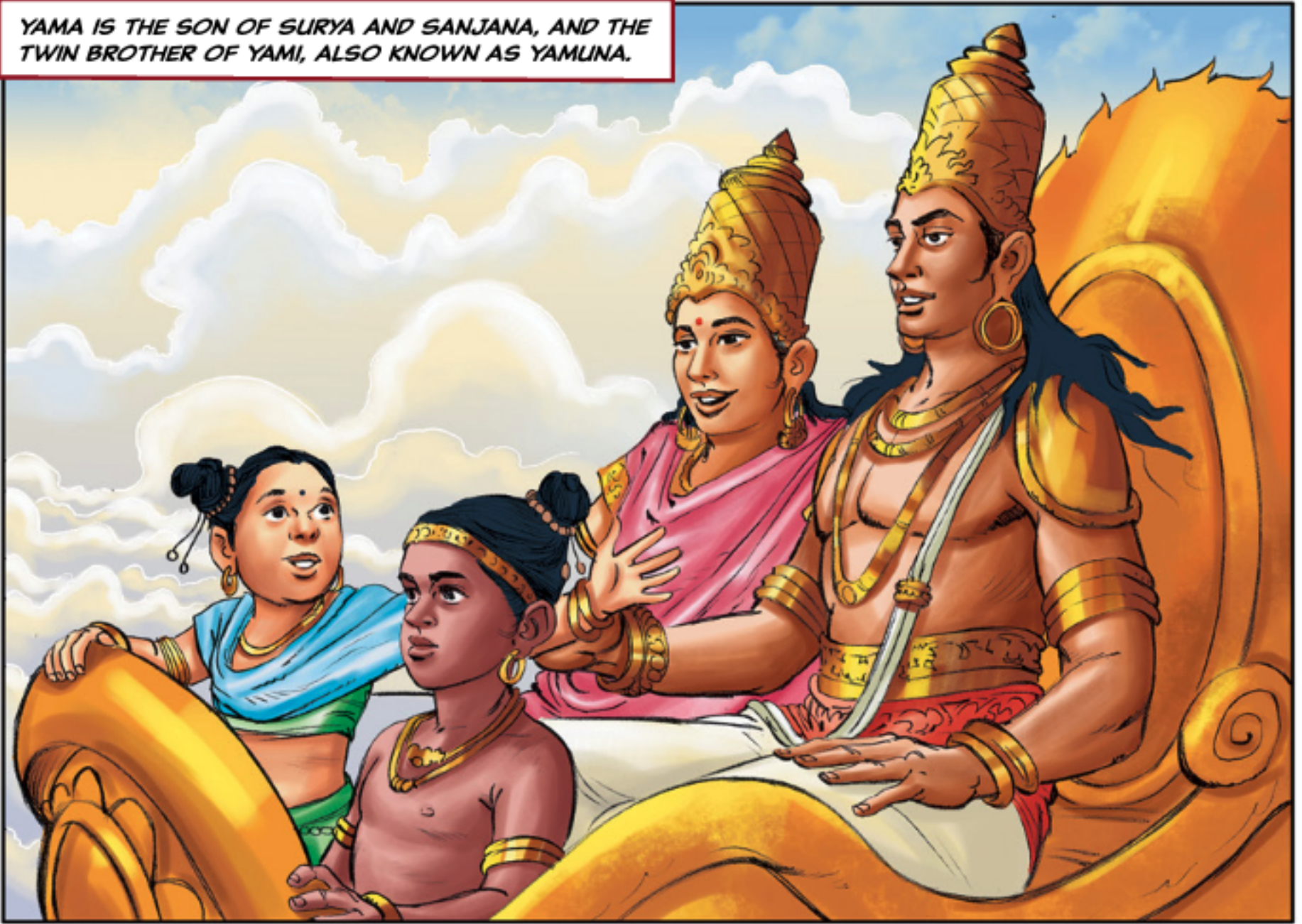
YAMA IS THE GOD OF DEATH AND THE LORD OF NARAKA*. HE IS ALSO KNOWN AS KAALA, THE GOD OF TIME, AND DHARMARAJA, THE GOD OF JUSTICE.

YAMA IS ONE OF THE ASHTADIKPALAS, THE GUARDIANS OF THE EIGHT DIRECTIONS. HE IS THE GUARDIAN OF THE SOUTH, WHERE HIS KINGDOM LIES.

YAMA IS OFTEN DEPICTED WITH AN ANGRY EXPRESSION. HIS VAHANA IS A BUFFALO. HE CARRIES A MACE, A NOOSE OR A ROD KNOWN AS YAMADANDA.

*THE KINGDOM OF YAMA, WHERE SINNERS ARE PUNISHED AFTER DEATH

YAMA IS THE SON OF SURYA AND SANJANA, AND THE TWIN BROTHER OF YAMI, ALSO KNOWN AS YAMUNA.



YAMA WAS ALSO THE FIRST MORTAL TO DIE, WHICH IS WHY HE BECAME THE KING OF ANCESTORS.



THE BHAVISHYA PURANA NARRATES THE TALE OF YAMA'S MARRIAGE. ONCE —

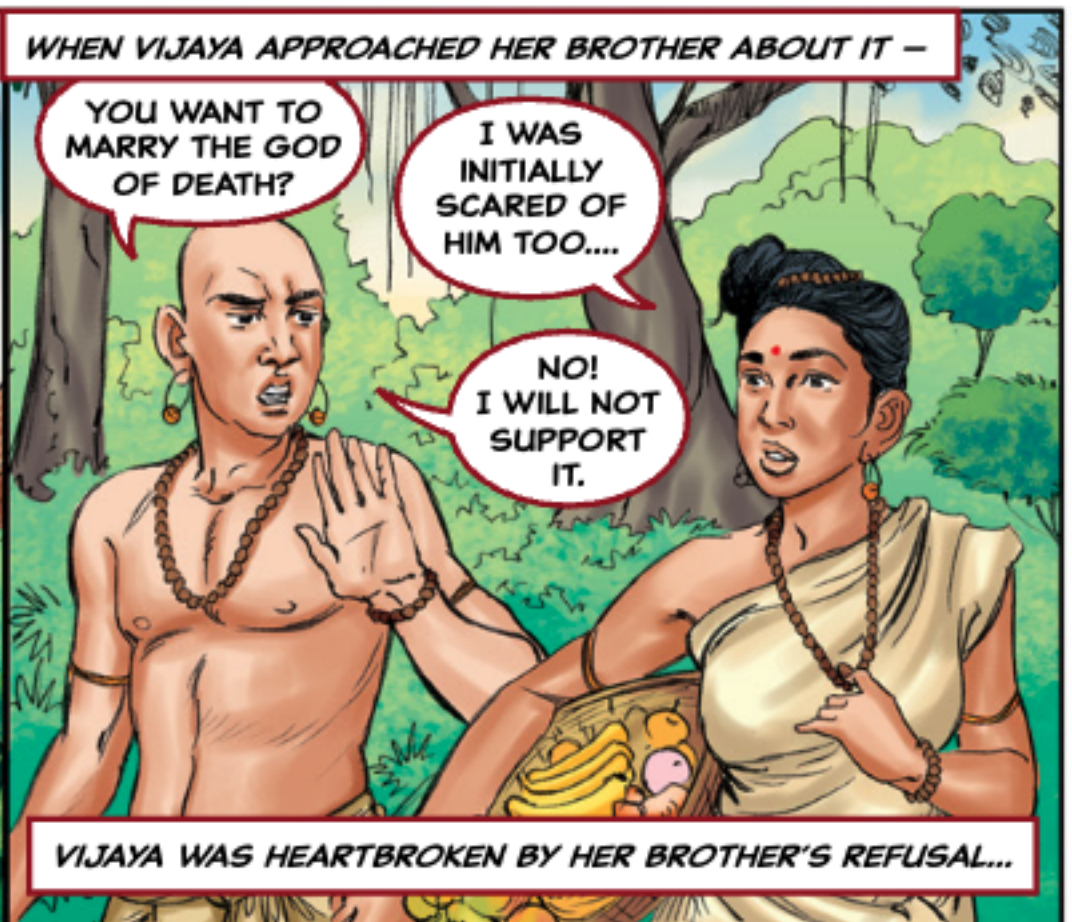
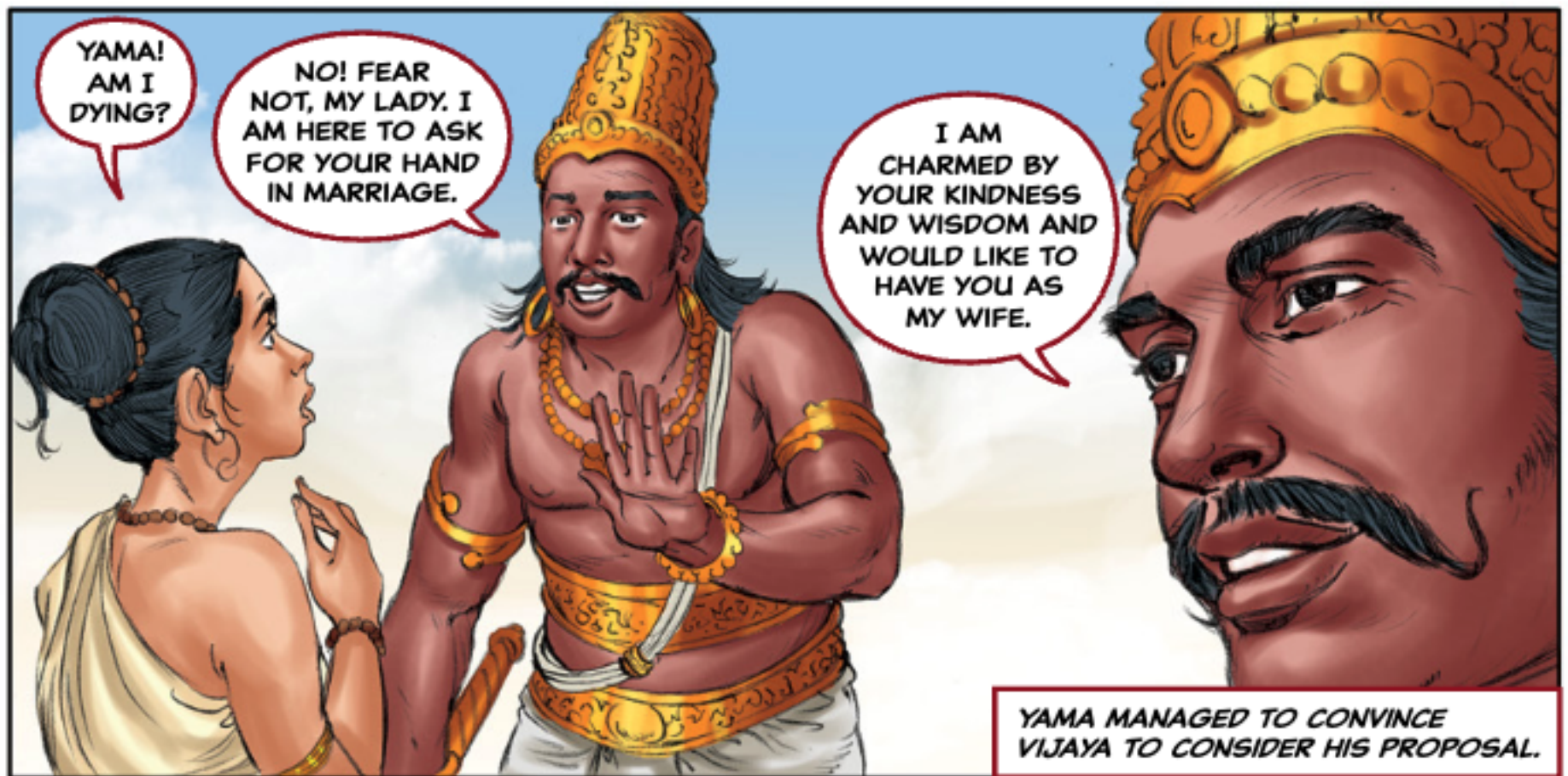


HE FOUND OUT THAT SHE WAS VIJAYA, THE DAUGHTER OF A BRAHMIN.

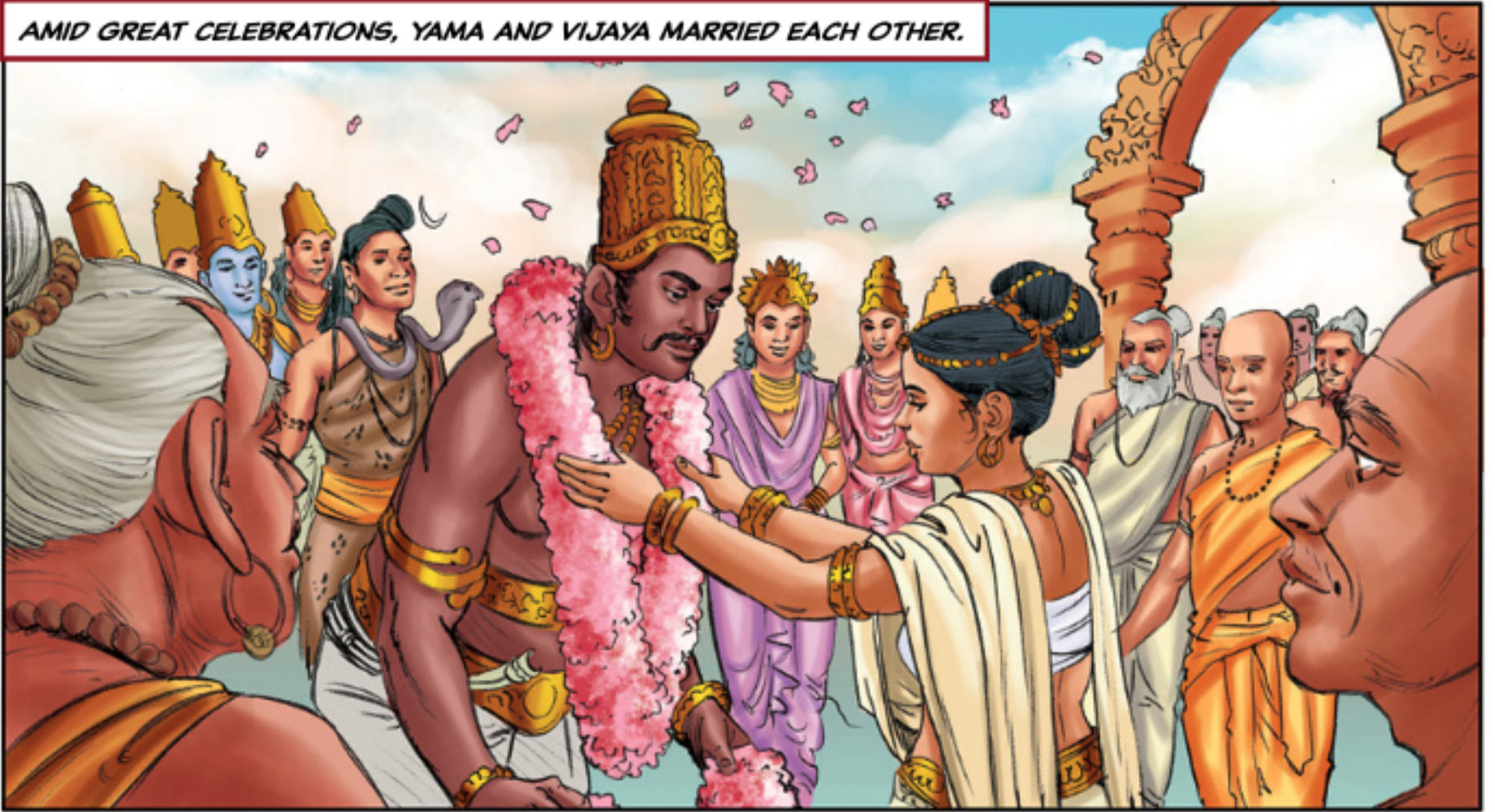


WHEN HE REACHED HER HOUSE —

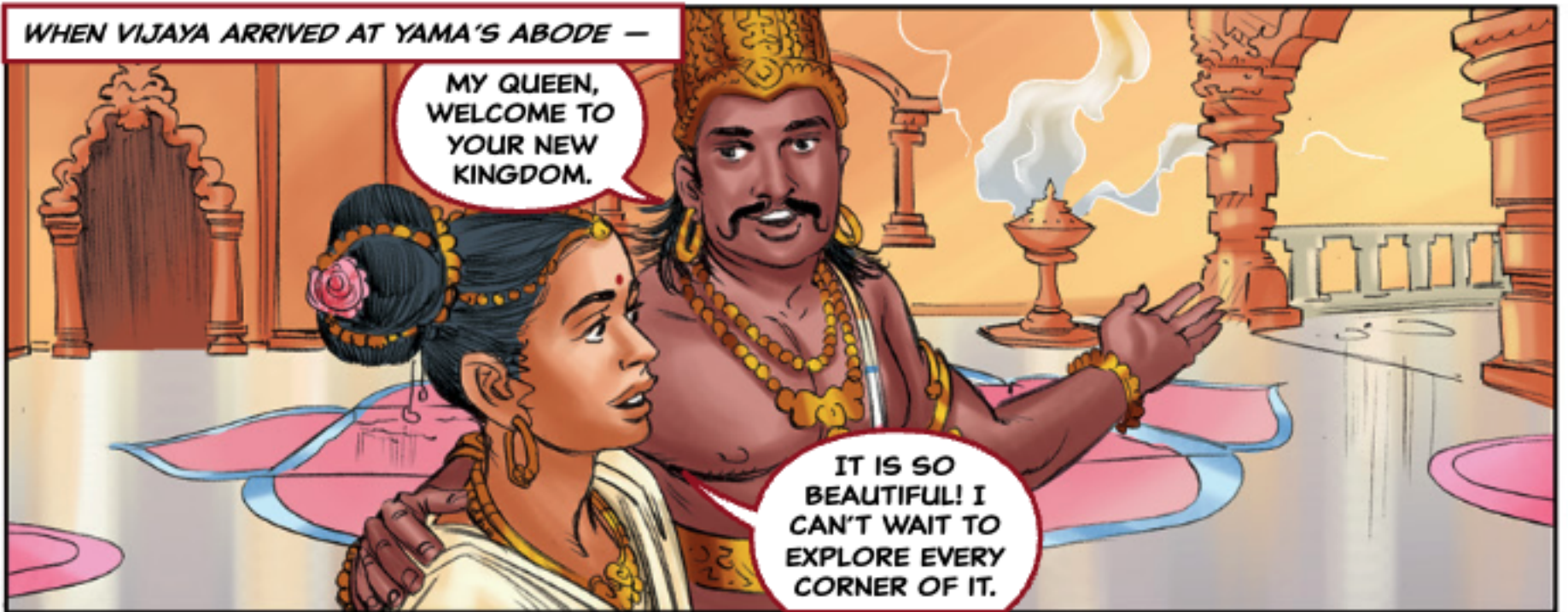




AMID GREAT CELEBRATIONS, YAMA AND VIJAYA MARRIED EACH OTHER.



WHEN VIJAYA ARRIVED AT YAMA'S ABODE —



YOU ARE FREE TO
GO ANYWHERE EXCEPT
TO THE SOUTHERN
QUARTER OF THE
KINGDOM.

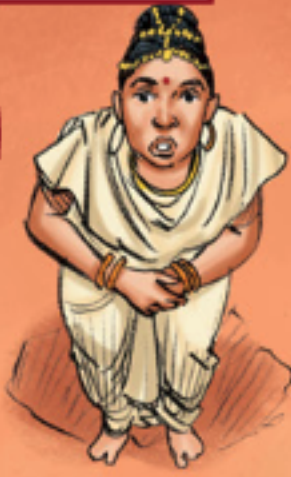


AT FIRST, VIJAYA WAS HAPPY
TO AGREE, BUT SOON —



CURIOSITY GOT THE BETTER OF HER.

I WILL
VISIT THE
SOUTHERN
QUARTER
TODAY.



WHEN SHE REACHED THERE —

WHAT IS
HAPPENING
HERE?



THESE
PEOPLE DID
NOT FOLLOW THE
PATH OF DHARMA
AND ARE BEING
PUNISHED FOR
IT AFTER THEIR
DEATHS.



**VIJAYA WAS HORRIFIED AT
THE SCENES OF SUFFERING
IN FRONT OF HER, WHEN
SUDDENLY —**

THAT
IS MY
MOTHER!



VIJAYA RUSHED TO
CONFRONT YAMA.

WHY DID YOU
NOT LISTEN TO MY
WARNING? I KNEW
YOU WOULDN'T BE
ABLE TO BEAR
THAT SIGHT.

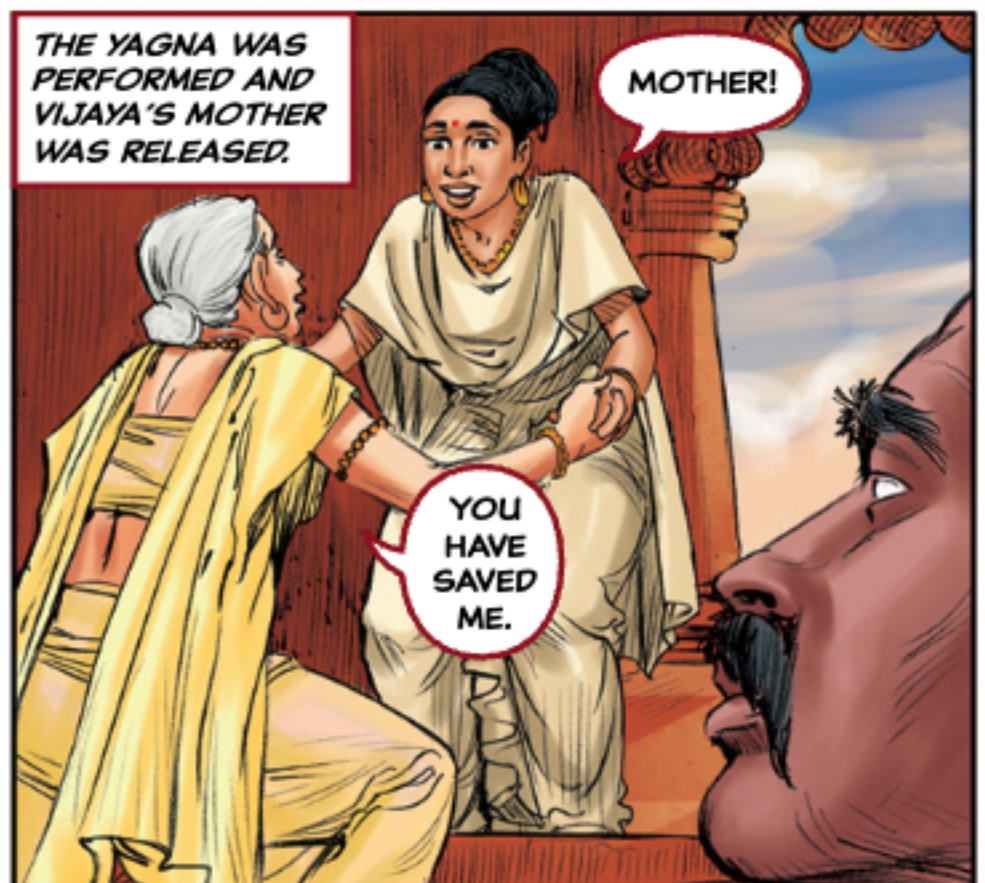
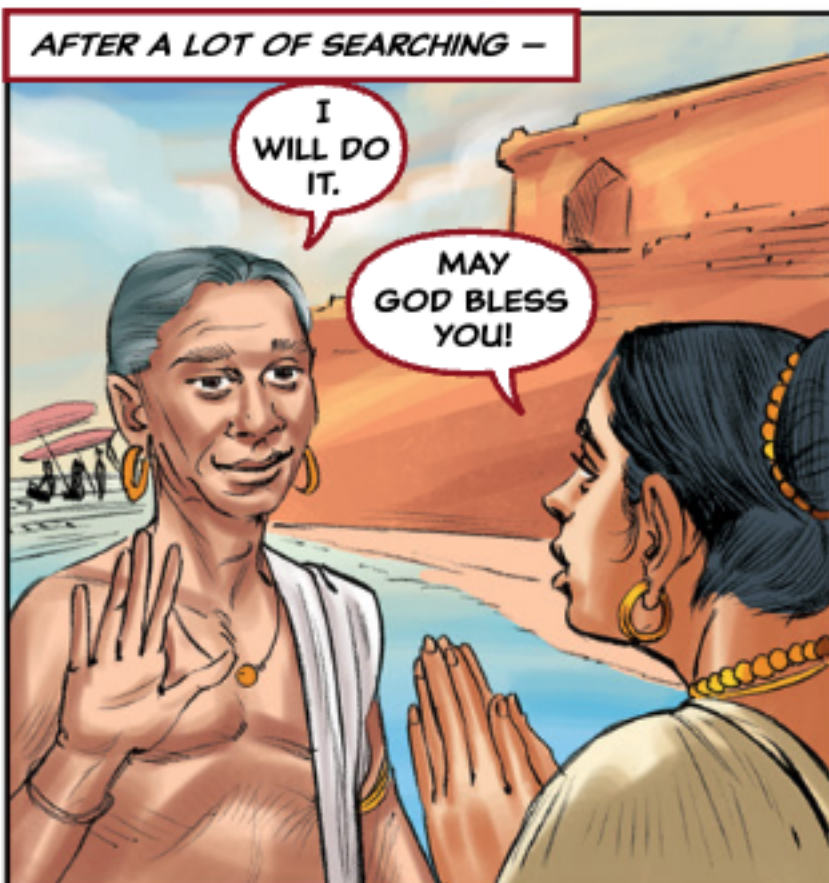
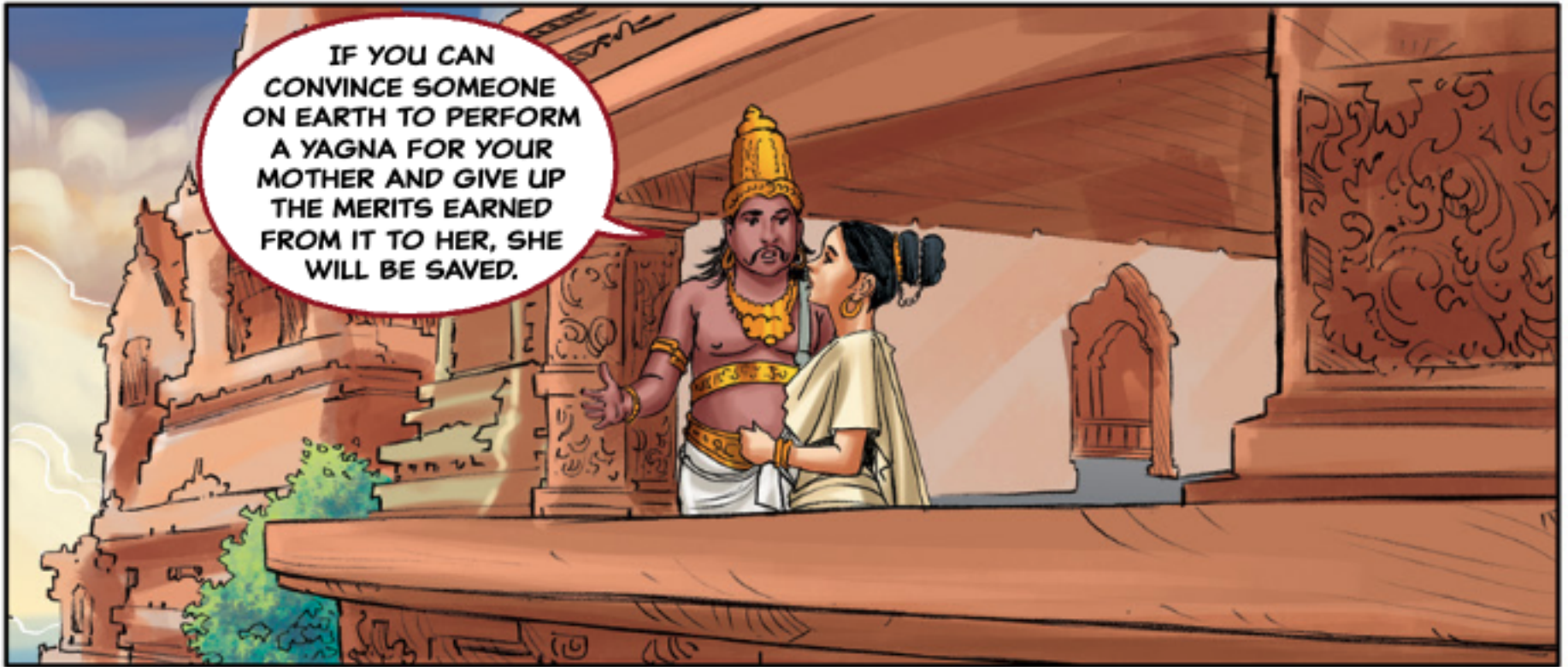
BUT MY
MOTHER! WHY IS
SHE THERE, YAMA?
SHE WAS A PIOUS
WOMAN.

EVERYONE
BEING PUNISHED
IN NARAKA HAS
COMMITTED SINS
THEY DID NOT
ATONE FOR.

BUT
CAN YOU
NOT SPARE
ONE SOUL?
YOUR WIFE'S
MOTHER?

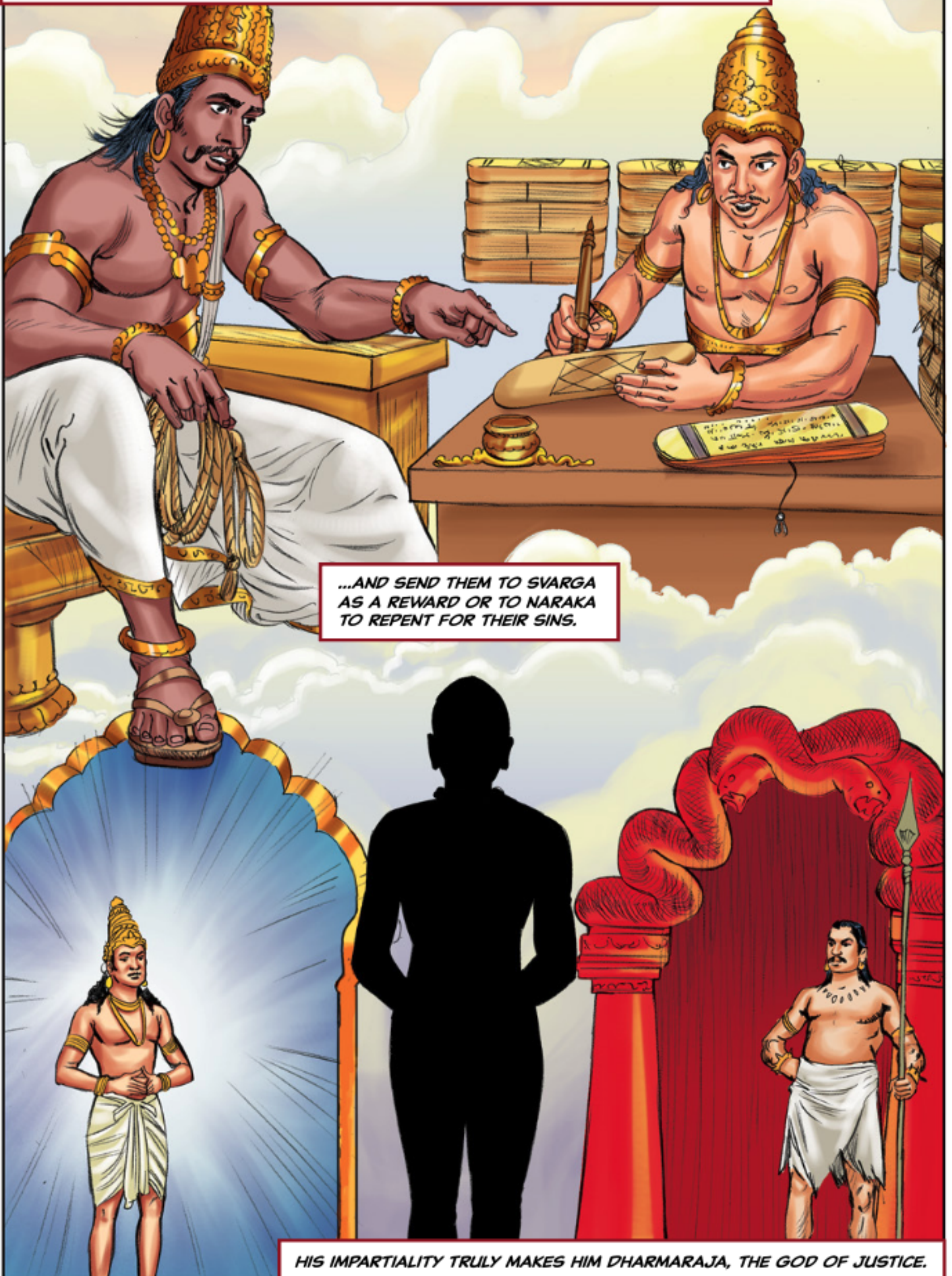
IT WOULD
BE UNJUST OF ME
TO BE PARTIAL TO
YOUR MOTHER,
DEAR.

HOWEVER,
THERE IS A
WAY.



*HEAVEN

YAMA WAS A FAIR RULER AND JUDGE TO ALL HIS SUBJECTS. AFTER THEIR DEATH, HE WOULD HEAR OUT ALL THEIR DEEDS AND MISDEEDS AS RECORDED BY CHITRAGUPTA...



...AND SEND THEM TO SVARGA AS A REWARD OR TO NARAKA TO REPENT FOR THEIR SINS.

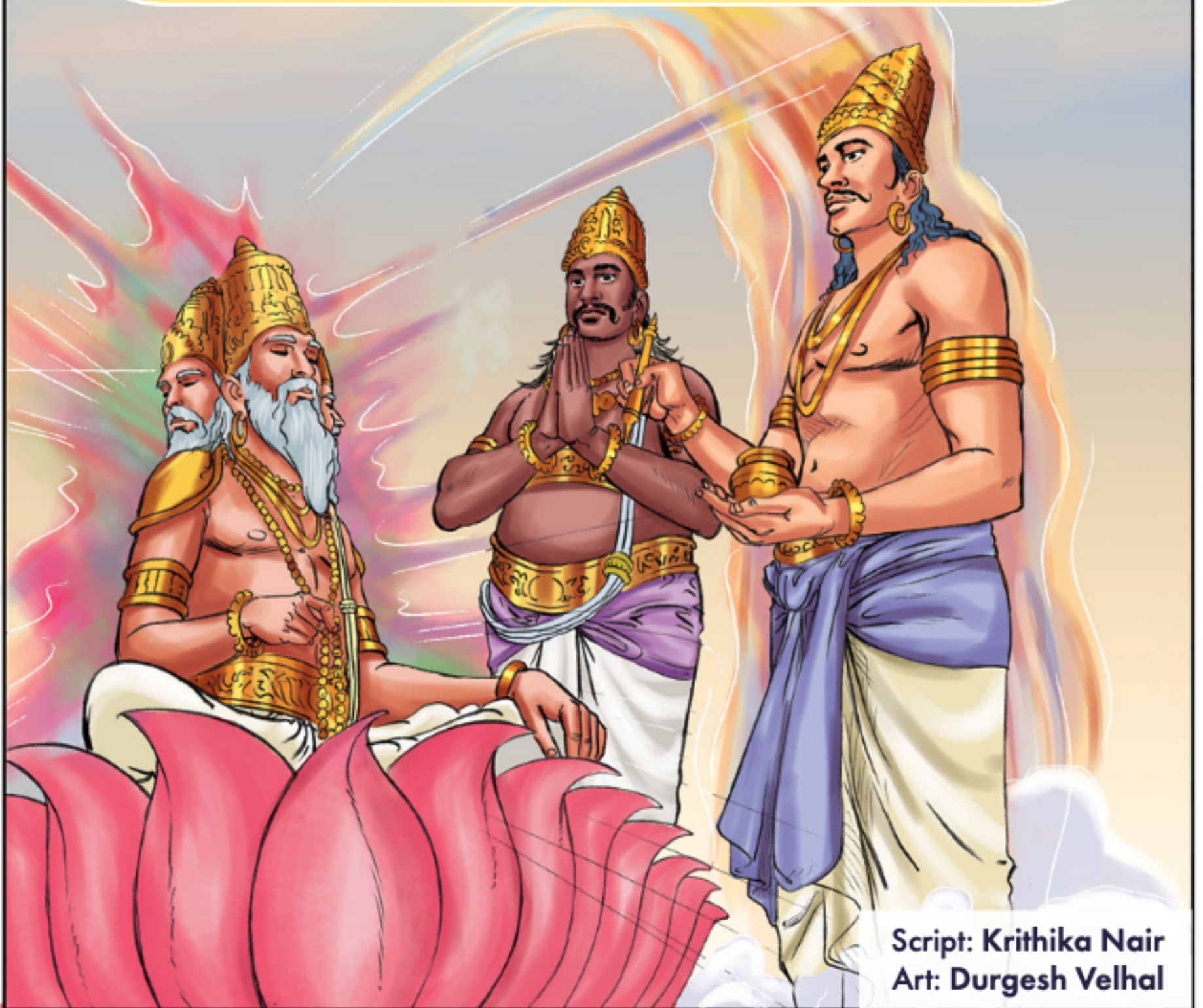
HIS IMPARTIALITY TRULY MAKES HIM DHARMARAJA, THE GOD OF JUSTICE.

CHITRAGUPTA

Once, Yama complained to Brahma that he found it difficult to keep track of everyone's actions on earth. Brahma meditated upon the problem and out of his body emerged a man holding a pen and an inkpot. Brahma named him Chitrugupta and he became the accountant of people's deeds, responsible for keeping track of their actions, virtues and vices.

After human beings depart from the land of the living, they are brought to Yama so that their fate of going to Svarga Loka or Naraka Loka can be decided. Based on Chitrugupta's records of the person's deeds and misdeeds on earth, Yama passes his judgement.

Chitrugupta is also known as Kayastha, as he existed unseen in Brahma's kaya or body. The Chitruguptavanshi Kayastha community of North India, who traditionally worked as administrators, accountants and scribes, believe that their lineage can be traced back to Chitrugupta.



Script: Krithika Nair
Art: Durgesh Velhal

EDITORIAL NOTE



“The thought of producing a book on gods of a bygone era had always fascinated us. These divine entities had been worshipped and propitiated by our ancestors since Vedic times.

Somewhere down the years, their glory dimmed and they were mentioned only in relation to the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In ‘Devas’ we hope to rekindle an interest in the gods who once ruled the heavens and looked after their people on earth.

Research is the foundation of any Amar Chitra Katha title. Both, writers and artists, have delved through reams of material to finally bring you this compilation.”

Reena Ittyerah Puri, *Executive Editor*

“There is a sense of satisfaction for writers and artists at the end of every comic that is produced. It is the result of endless scribbles and sketches, character designs, costume designs and background drawings and, most importantly, research.

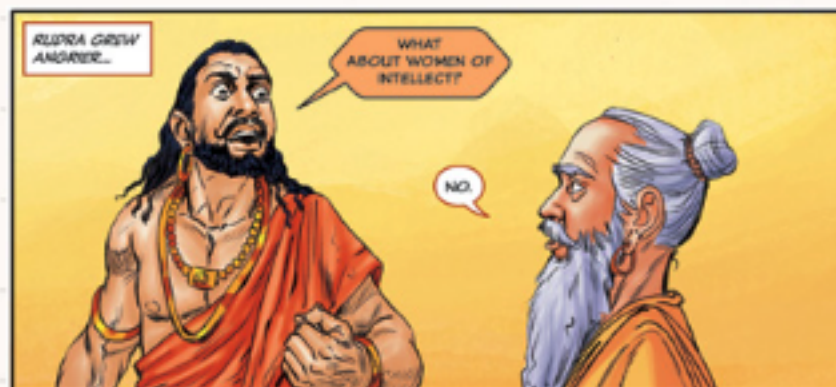
Meticulous attention to every detail is the secret to a good comic. The going back and forth, working with the writers, trying to get the best character and background that would make each panel and page perfect. I feel that a sneak peek into the mind of the artist, the colourists and designers would be interesting for the reader.

‘Behind the Scenes’ is a glimpse into the scribbles and sketches that make the framework for the final illustrations that you see in the book.”

Savio Mascarenhas, *Group Art Director*

SCRIPT EVOLUTION

"While Shiva is a calm yogi, Rudra is one of his forms that is associated with rage and destruction. This part of the script aimed at capturing the transformation from calm to enraged. The script was revised to make the exchange between the characters short and tense, to highlight the transformation better."



Revised Version

"Since the exchange between the characters is not action-oriented, background colours, skin tone, and dynamic expression changes were used to portray the anger."

Krithika Nair, Project Head

First Draft

10.1

UC: Rudran grew angrier...

Rudran (SB): What about women of good character?

VIS: Rudra looks shocked and angry.

10.2

Nakkeerar (SB): No.

VIS: Nakkeerar looks unmoved.

10.3

UC: ...and angrier...

Rudran (SB): What about apsaras and yakshas?

VIS: Rudran looks angrier. Veins popping, etc.

10.4

Nakkeerar (SB): No.

VIS: Nakkeerar still looks unmoved.

P11

11.1

UC: ...and angrier.

Rudran (SB): What about the goddesses that adorn devalogam* like stars?

*home of the Gods and Devas

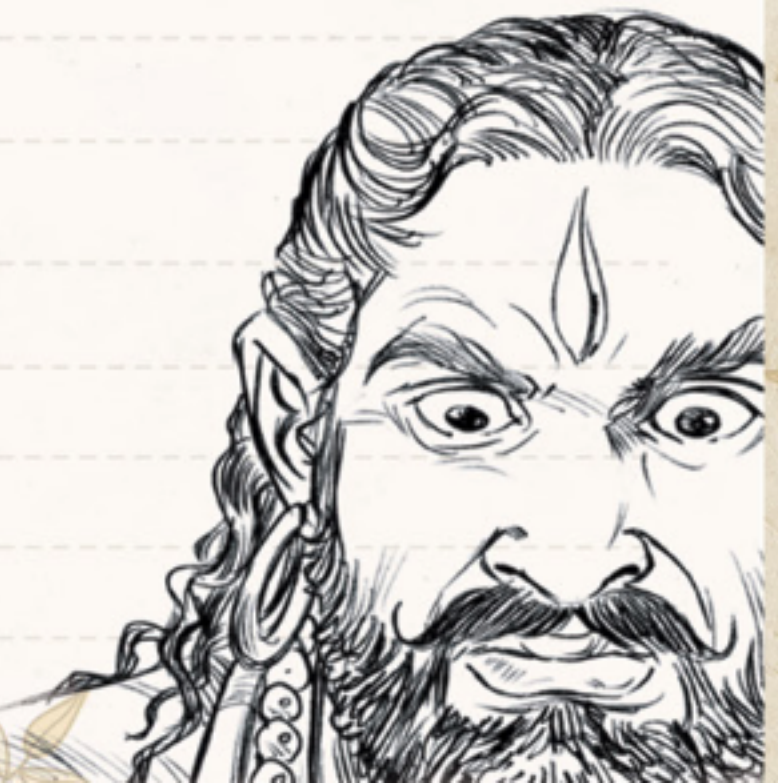
VIS: Rudran looks even angrier. Red eyes, etc.

11.2

Nakkeerar (SB): Not even the divine mother I worship, Meenakshi* herself, has such hair!

*one among the many names for Goddess Parvati, in these parts

VIS: Nakkeerar disagrees.





PRITHVI

"For Prithvi, I wanted the art to be a modern interpretation of the goddess, one that reflected her role of nurturer and provider and her connection to the earth, which she was said to personify. Traditionally, Prithvi or Bhoomi Devi is shown with fine garments and jewellery, but for this version, I wanted her to be dressed in a way that reflected her earthiness — green and brown colours; a plain, simple saree; jewellery made from flowers and leaves, braided, long hair, brown skin tone, etc. Similarly, throughout the story, she was connected to the natural elements around her — for example, when she is introduced, she is shown as almost growing out of the earth or merging with nature around her. Essentially, Prithvi is nature and the art and colours would need to concentrate on highlighting those natural aspects."

Kayva Gokhale, Script Writer



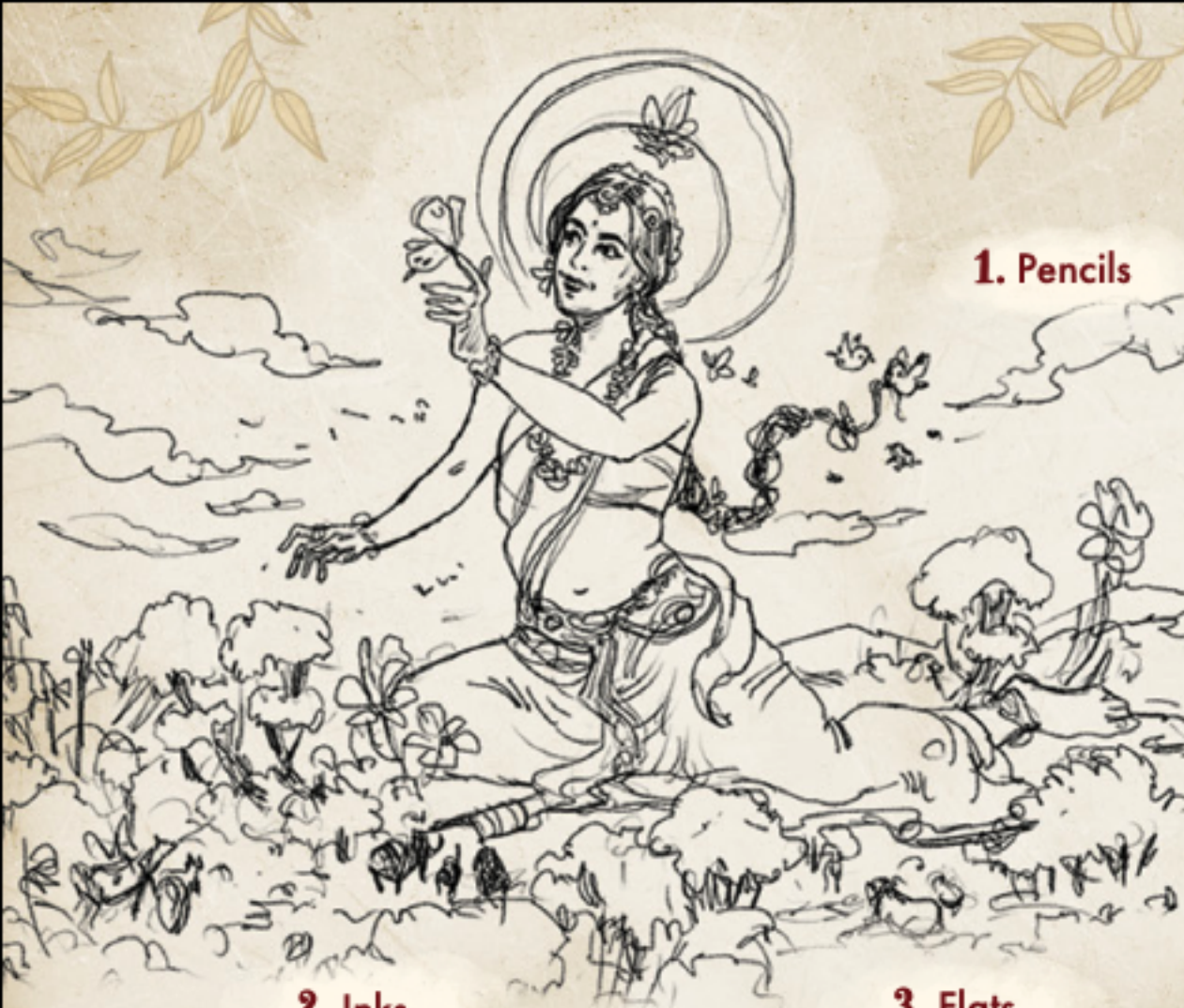
1. Pencils

2. Inks

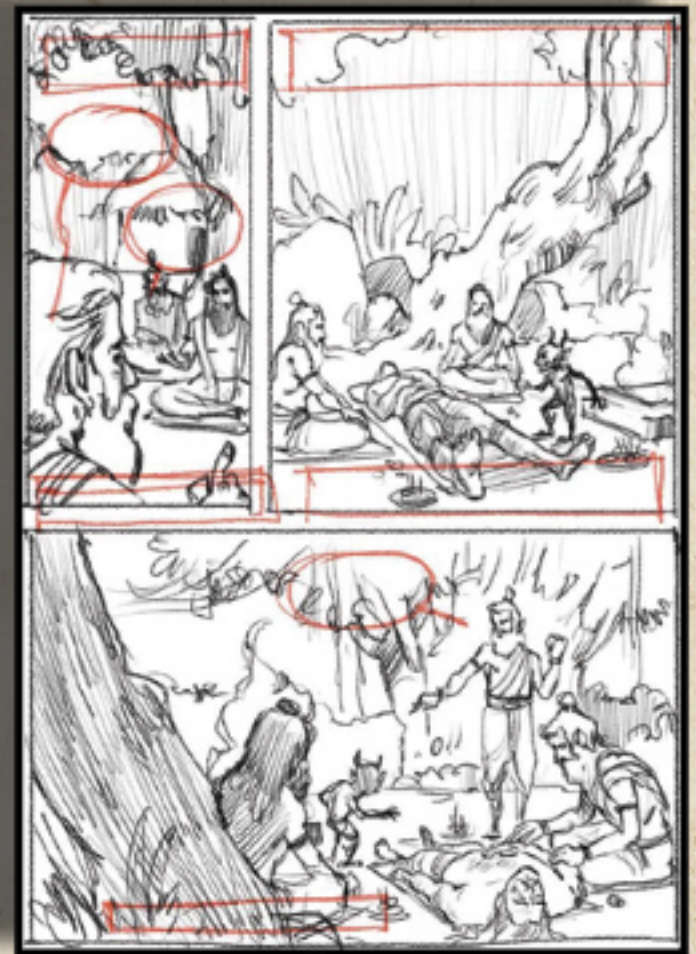
3. Flats

4. Shading





1. Pencils



2. Inks

3. Flats

4. Shading



"The writer's brief had stated that the story should have earthy, neutral colours. Since greens and browns are quite muted and not too vibrant, we had to be creative with the colouring to make the art stand out. We used earthy colours in their most saturated forms to make them look brighter than usual. For example, we used yellow with green shading or orange toned browns to make the colours stand out.

The colours of the skies were deliberately exaggerated. We didn't limit ourselves to simple blues, but instead approached each sky in a painterly manner, incorporating pinks, oranges, and yellows to create a strong sense of drama. Similarly, the greenery in the story was depicted in a variety of hues, including verdana green, lime green, and sap green, along with yellows and oranges to keep the landscapes full of life."

Ritoparna Hazra, Art Director



SOMA

"Soma is usually associated with the Moon God. However, this was a little-known story about Soma as the deity associated with the Soma plant. I wanted the script to be fun and fantastical, since there are lots of interesting twists in the plot and it is set in magical places like the skies or Indra's court."

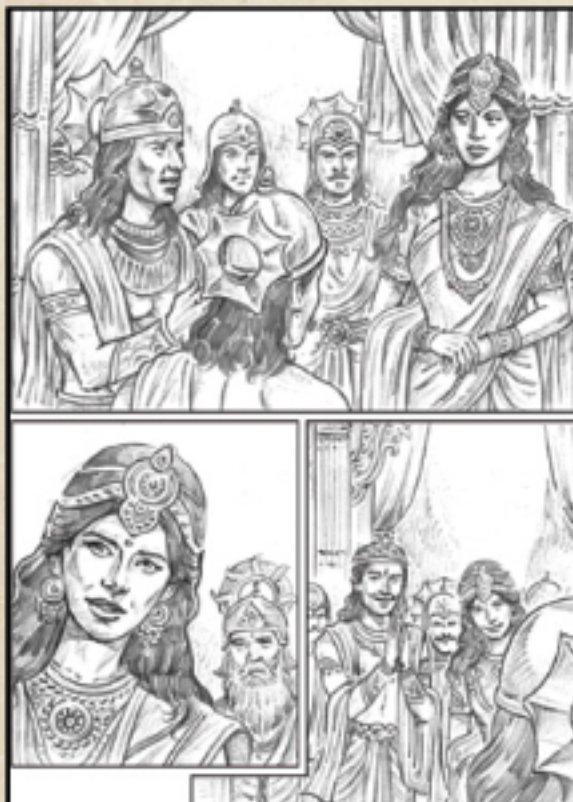
Kayva Gokhale, Script Writer



INKS

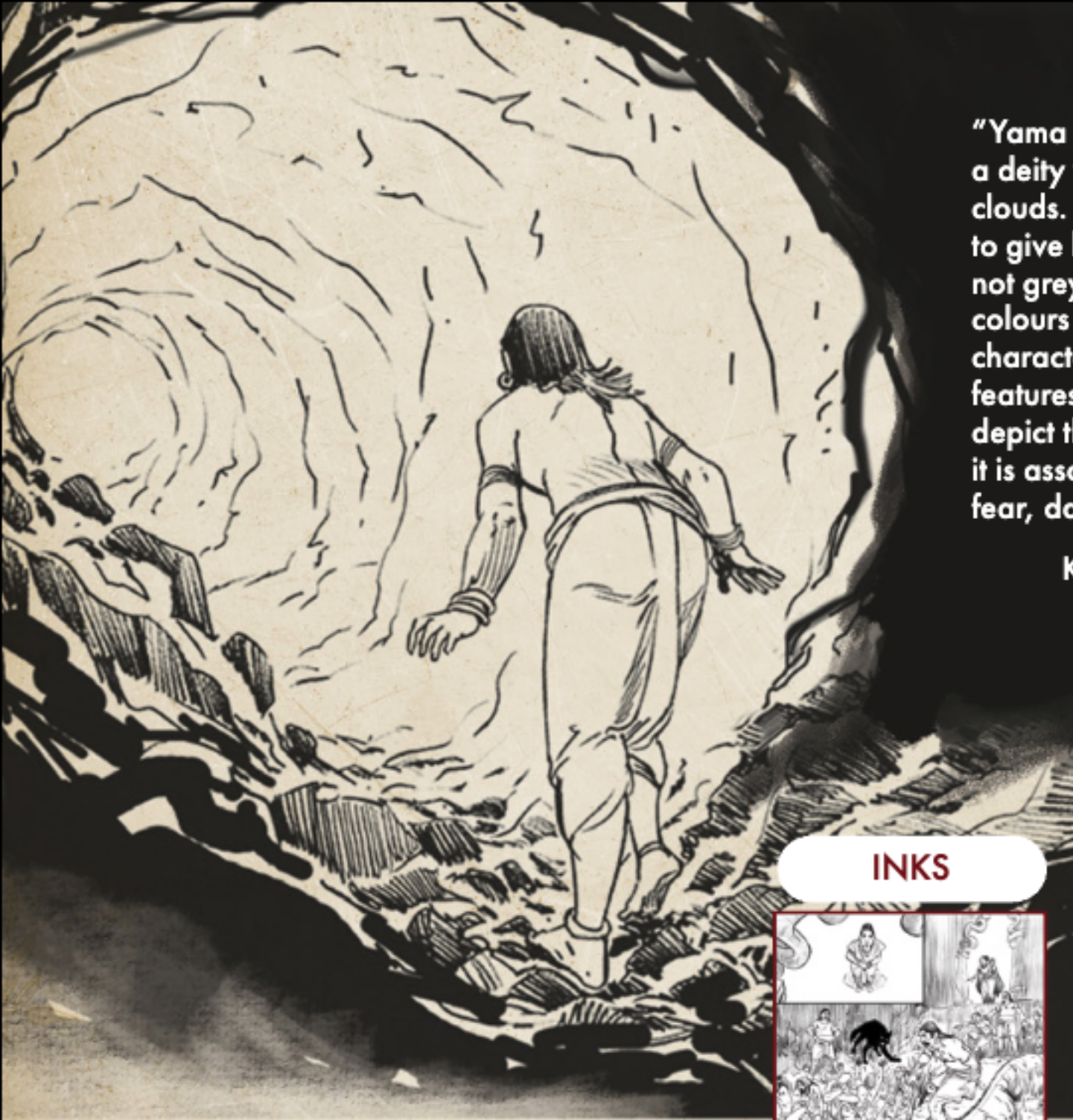
FLATS

COLOURS



"The artist, Harsho Mohan Chatteraj's art is always interesting to colour because of all the details and sketchy lines! However, it is important to distinguish the characters from the background in such a style. That is why I prefer to use mostly saturated colours accentuated with a stark white line. Also, if you look closely, Harsho tends to leave a faint gap between the inks of the characters and the background so it's easier to distinguish the characters if you give a lighter colour in that gap!"

Sanjhiya Mayekar, Colourist



"Yama is described in legends as a deity with skin as dark as storm clouds. The decision was made to give him a dark skin tone but not grey or black, as darker colours would compromise the character's expressions and features. Red was chosen to depict the depths of naraka, as it is associated with elements of fear, danger, and heat or fire."

Krithika Nair, Script Writer

COLOURS — HELL

INKS

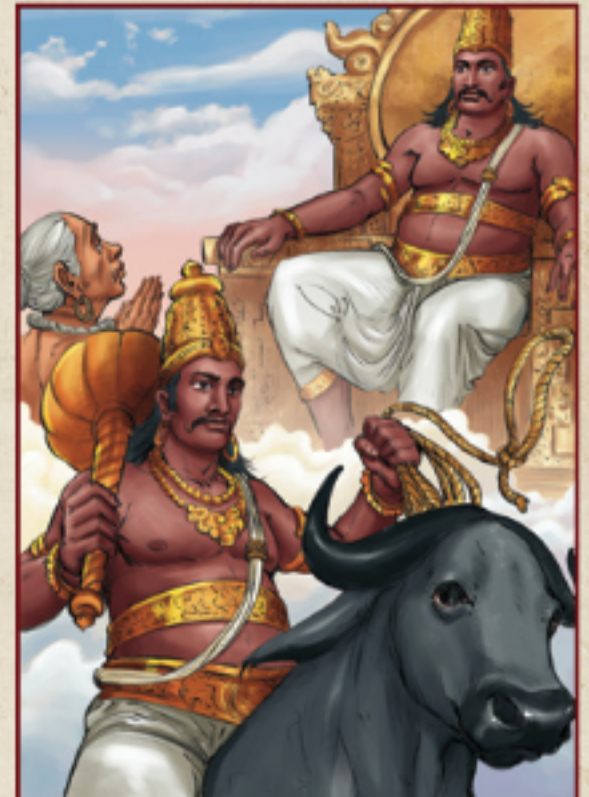


YAMA

INKS

FLATS

COLOURS



LAYOUTS

BUBBLE EXPLORATION



PUSHAN LAYOUTS

"Subir Dey's art for Pushan has a gentle flow to it that comes through in the compositions as well as the line work. The lettering was designed to match that flow. C-shaped pointers are a standard for lettering; this was the first story in which we experimented with S-shaped pointers. To offset the gentle curves of the pointers, the bubbles were made a little more squarish than the standard elliptical shape we use. Each pointer in this story was custom drawn using the pen-tool to fit the art of the specific panel it was placed in."



FONT



"The font used in most recently released titles of Amar Chitra Katha is 'Unmasked BB'. It was selected specifically for the large number of words it could fit compactly in a limited amount of space, which serves well for particularly verbose books."

"For this book, we used a font called 'Classic Comic'. With a slightly bolder stroke, and cleaner letter construction, Classic Comic makes the text appear much more legible, while managing to fit a comparable number of words in a limited amount of space."



RUDRA LAYOUT

"Rudra's rage has a very strong presence in the story. The pointers of his speech bubbles were designed to be representative of his emotions. In his calm, benevolent state, the pointers curve gently in an S-shape. However, when he is enraged, sharp pointers have been used to depict the intensity of his anger. Additionally, hexagonal bubbles with rounded edges have been used for Rudra's dialogues, to contrast against the standard elliptical bubbles used for all the other characters."



WHAT ABOUT THE GODDESSES THAT ADORN HEAVEN LIKE STARS?

WELL? WHERE'S THE REWARD?

NEVER MIND THAT. ARE YOU IN NEED OF A POEM?

IT LOOKS LIKE RAVANA WON'T STOP UNTIL HE IS IN LANKA.

VARUNA'S MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, HE LEFT RAVANA'S BODY.

A DISGUISED INDRA THEN APPROACHED RAVANA.

"Each god in this book has been assigned a unique identifying colour based on the theme of their story or the element they are associated with. For example, Agni, the god of fire has been assigned the colour orange; Pushan, who is a form of the Sun god has been assigned yellow; Varuna, the god of oceans is assigned blue, and so on.

Based on this primary colour, a unique colour palette was defined for each story. It was important to keep the colour palette of the art in mind while doing so: while it was critical for the colours of the commentary boxes and speech bubbles to harmonise with the colours of the art, they also had to contrast against it so a reader could read the text with ease."

—Bhavani Nadgonde, Letterist

COLOUR PALETTE

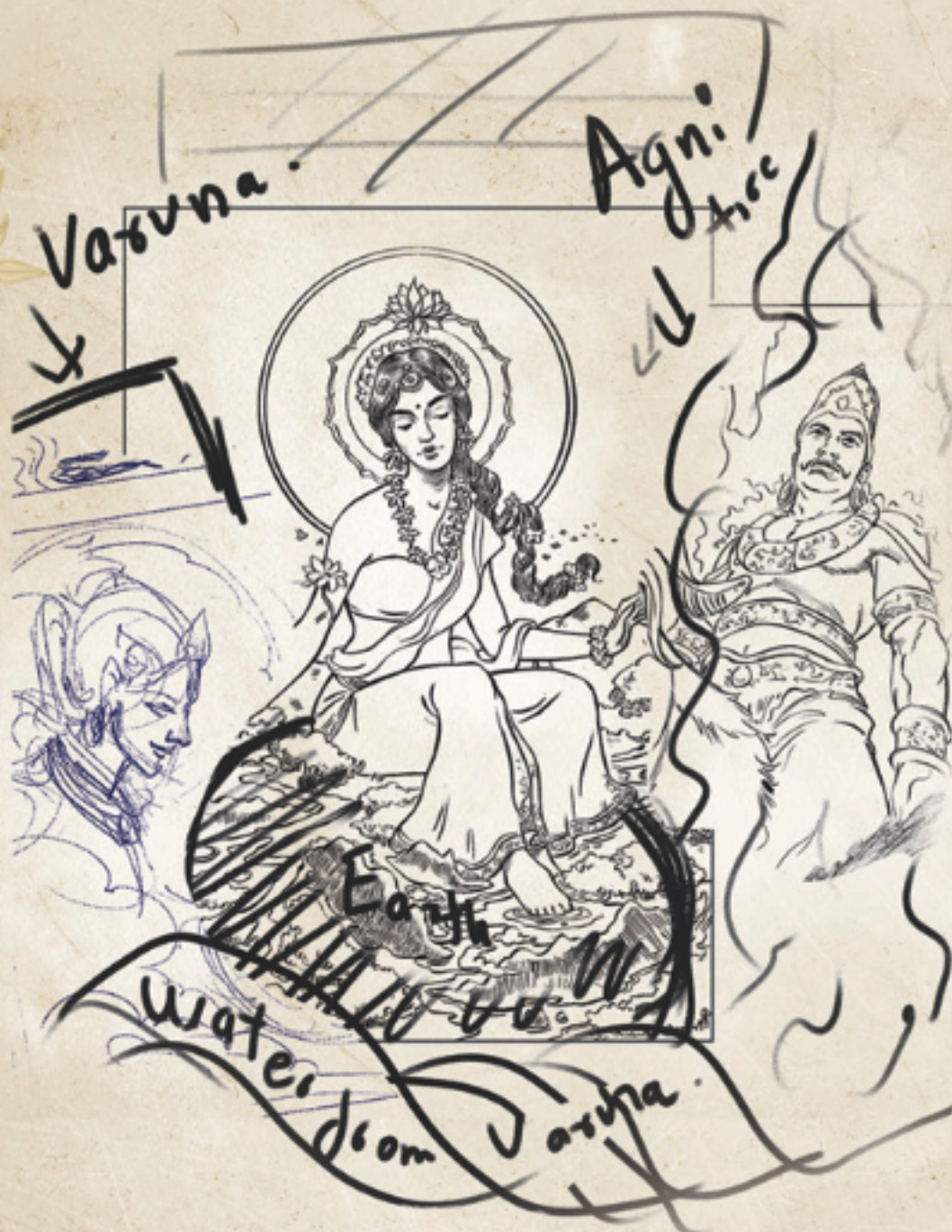


COVER EVOLUTION

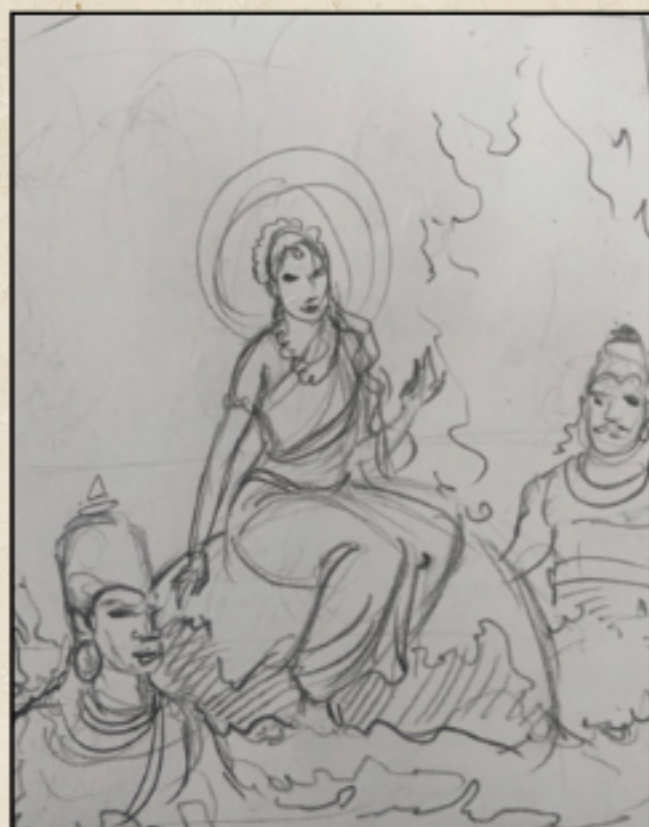
ELEMENTS — WATER,
FIRE, SPACE AND EARTH



CONCEPT SKETCH
GIVEN TO THE ARTIST



ROUGH SKETCH



INKS

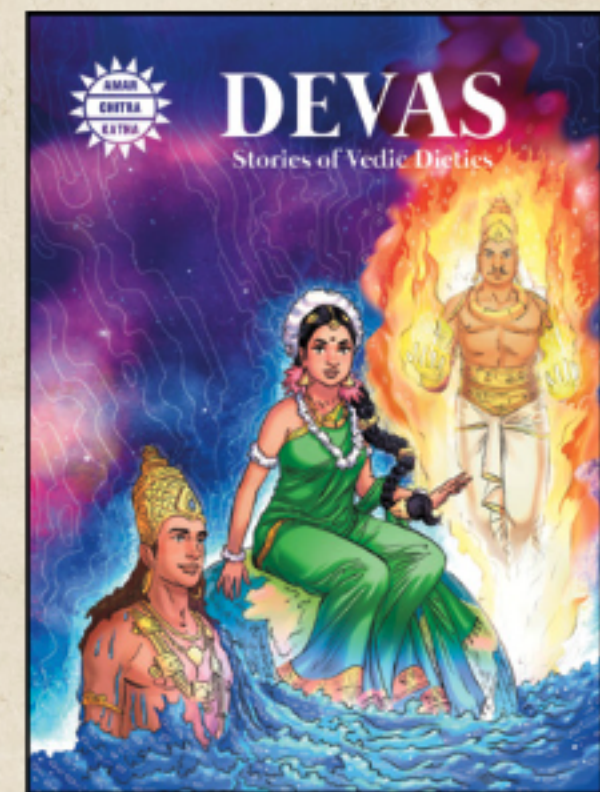
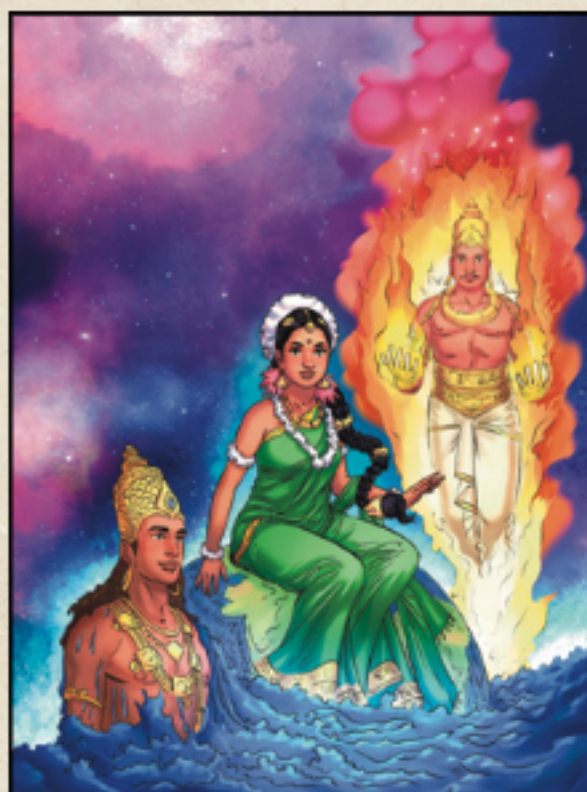
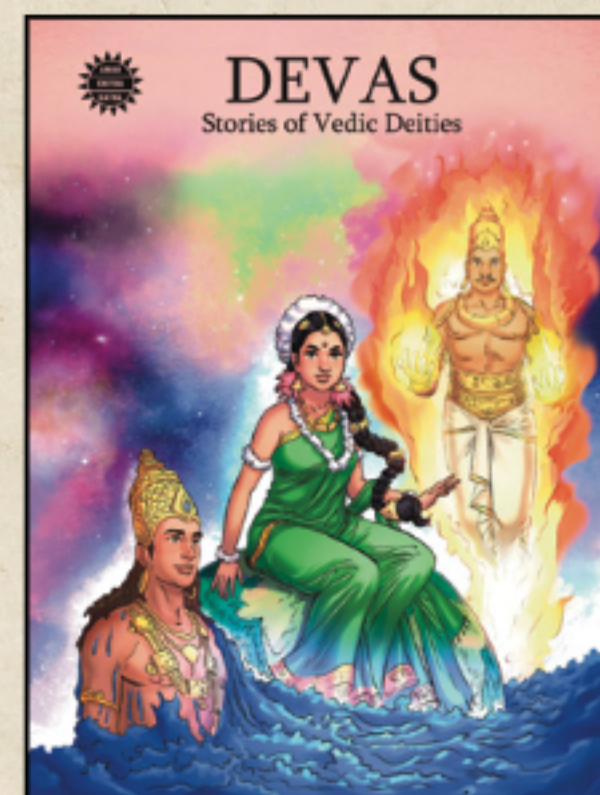
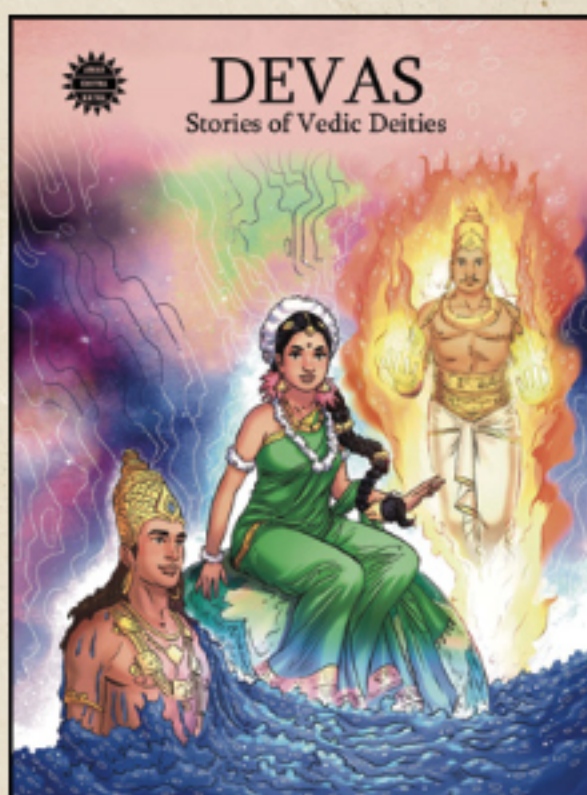
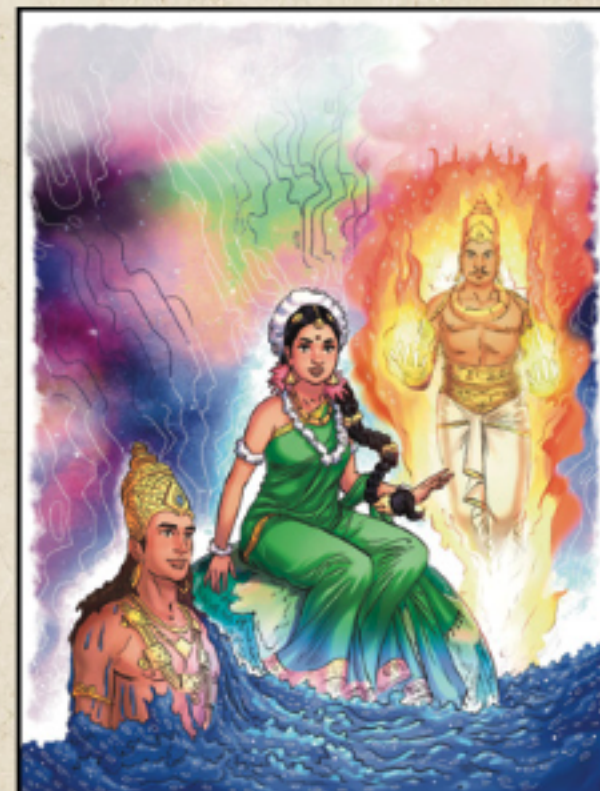
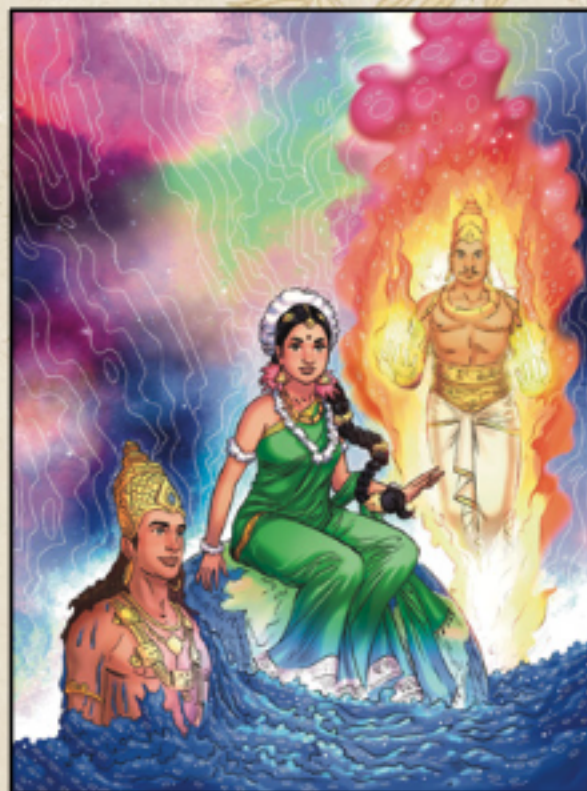


"While ideating for the cover, Krithika Nair from the editorial suggested an elemental-themed cover. Agni (Fire), Prithvi (Earth), and Varuna (Water) were chosen to be depicted on the cover against the backdrop of the cosmos."

"The cover of a book bears an immense responsibility: it must represent the subject matter of a book in a manner that is both accurate and appealing. Whether a person chooses to pick up a book or not depends entirely on the cover, and designing a cover that meets these requirements is always a challenge for the artist, the colourist, and the design team. The following spread showcases the evolution of the cover of this book, as it made its way through a myriad of iterations before arriving at the final version that has been printed."

"Sanjihiya Mayekar, the colourist, used a white pattern over the background to add style to the empty space. In the earlier versions of the cover, pink and lime green lent a colour variation to the cosmic background. In the final cover, the background was made much darker using deep purples and blues making the characters stand out against it clearly."

—Ritoparna Hazra,
Art Director



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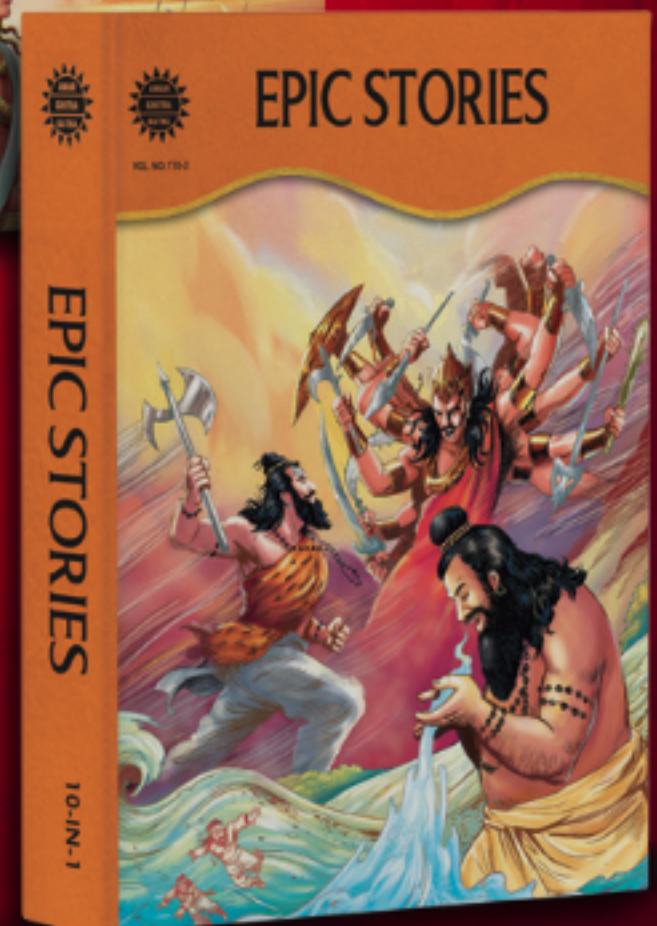
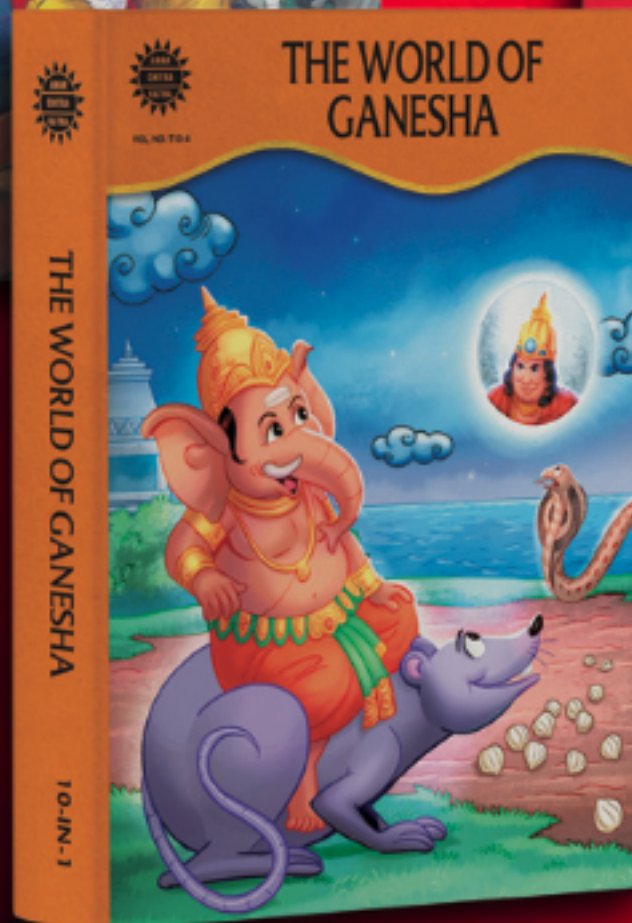
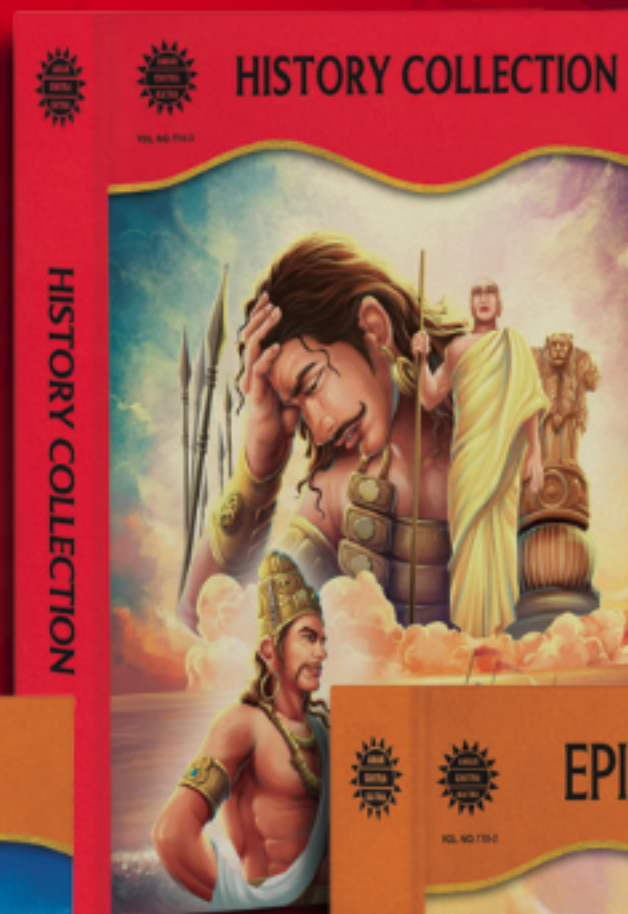
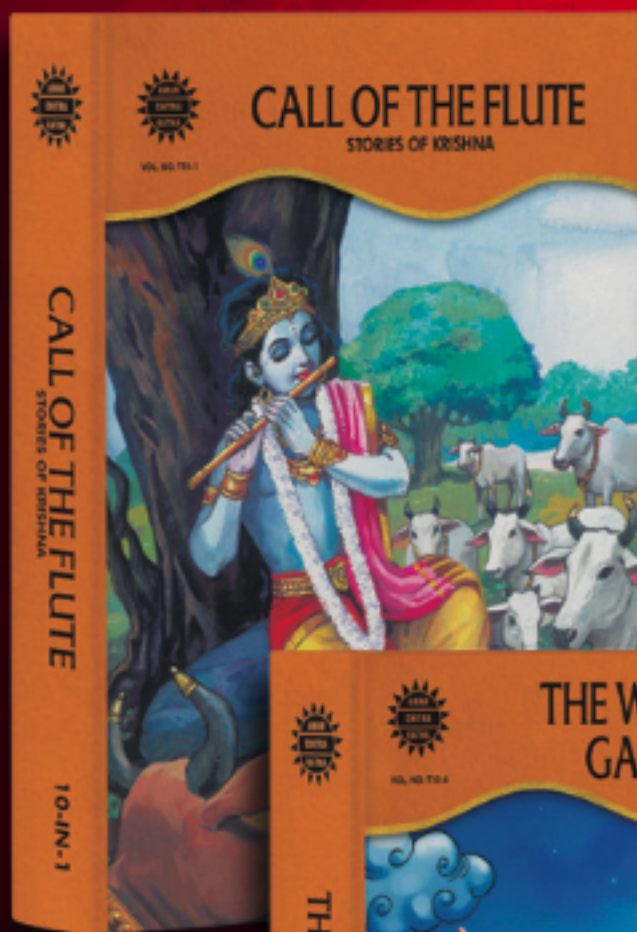


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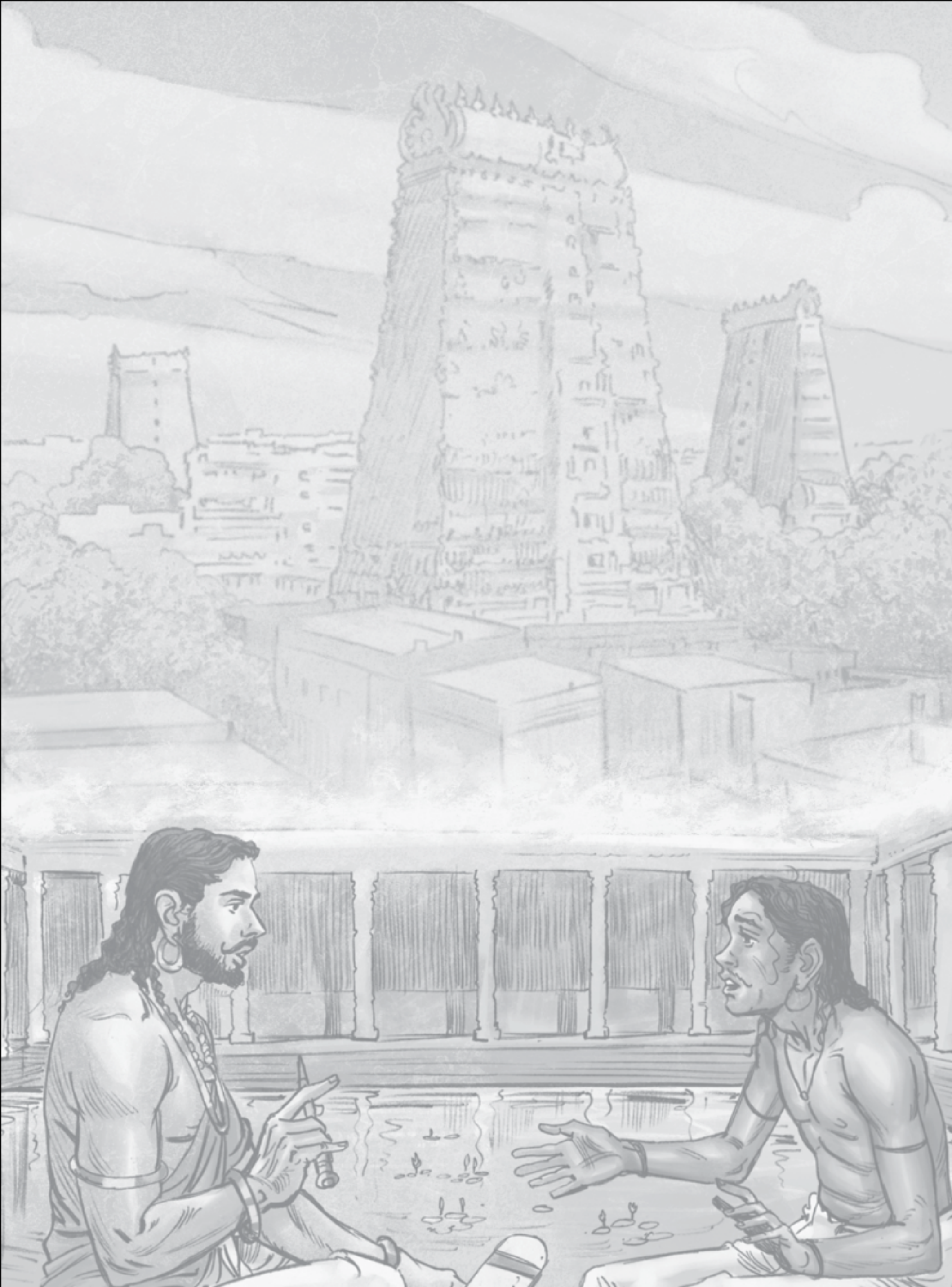
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